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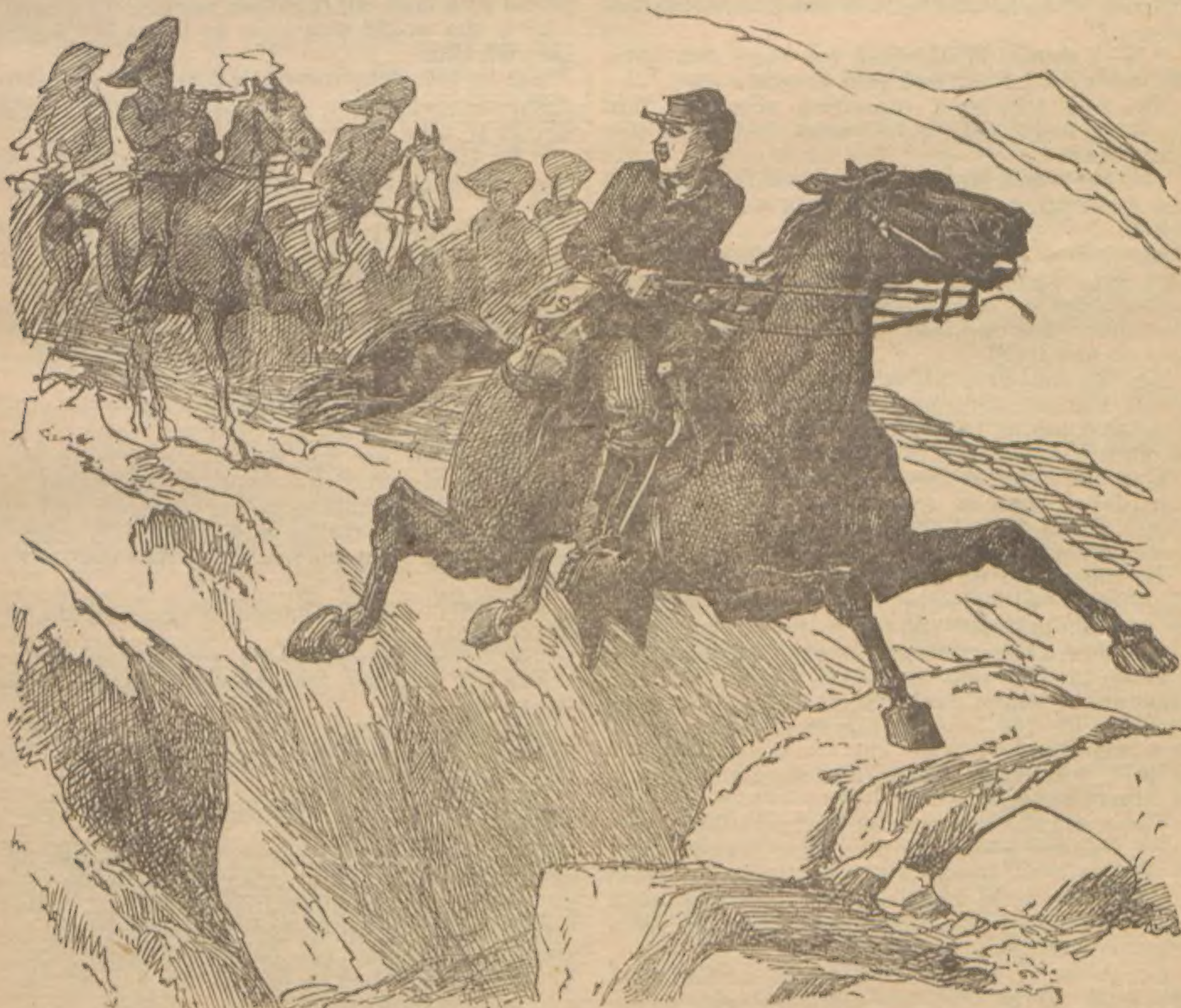
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DASHING BOB, the Pony Express Rider.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.



BREATHLESSLY THE DESTROYING ANGELS WATCHED THE BRAVE BOY, SAW THE HORSE FORCED INTO THE AIR, HANG SUSPENDED AN INSTANT AS IT WERE, AND THEN COME DOWN UPON THE OTHER BANK,

Dashing Bob,

THE PONY EXPRESS RIDER.

OR,

From a Cabin Boy to a Rocky
Mountain Courier.

A true history of the life of Robert H. Haslam,
(Pony Bob,) who made himself famous as a
Pony Express Rider and "Flying Cour-
ier" in the Rocky Mountains, a quar-
ter of a century ago.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOY RUNAWAY.

"I AM not guilty, and you shall not whip me!"

"I am convinced that you are guilty, and I will whip you until you confess that you are."

"No—no—no! do not strike me, for you are not my own father, and your son told you an untruth when he said that it was I who took the money!"

"Why should Walter tell me that you took the money if he had not seen you do so?"

The one addressed remained silent at this question, but gazed straight into the face of the questioner.

The one was a boy of sixteen, small in stature, but graceful, agile and quick in every movement.

He had a resolute, intelligent face, but his dark eyes were marred by being badly crossed, an unfortunate circumstance that had caused him much unhappiness even in the few years that he had lived.

He was well dressed, and the house where he dwelt was a handsome one, situated upon the English coast, and surrounding it were evidences of luxury which wealth alone could buy.

The one who confronted the youth was a stern-faced man of forty, with the air of one born in refinement, but a face that showed treachery and cruelty.

To the youth he stood in the relationship of step-father—a widower himself, with one son, he having married the boy's mother some two years before the scene that opens this story.

From the day that his step-father and his son entered the house, the troubles of my hero began, for he was bullied unmercifully by both, and only stood what he did for the sake of his mother, who, alas! too late had seen her mistake in marrying again.

The scene that brought a climax in the household, was caused by the discovery by the man that a wallet of bank-notes had been taken from his private desk, and his son laid the guilt upon his step-brother to escape himself from suspicion, he being the guilty one.

Conscious of his own innocence, and also of the guilt of his step-brother, my hero was determined not to be punished for the theft.

Nor would he tell upon his step-brother, although he had been always most shamefully used by him.

"If you did not steal the money, who did?" asked the man, sternly.

"I answer for myself only, and I swear that I am innocent," was the firm response of the boy.

"You lie, and I shall force you to confess," cried the man, and he sprung toward the boy, a cane uplifted to strike him.

Quick as a flash the boy turned and sprung into an open window, while he cried:

"Back, or I spring out!"

"You dare not!" shouted the man, but he paused.

"I will jump out before you shall strike me, for my life here is only torture," responded the youth, in a determined tone.

As he spoke he gazed coolly down from the dizzy height into the yard below.

A brick pavement was below him, and to fall upon it was to meet certain death.

A short distance away stood a large tree, and the boy looked wistfully toward its branches, as though wishing it were possible for him to reach it, but the distance seemed too great.

It was nearly sunset, and the earth was bathed in a golden light, while the sea was placid as a lake, all together making up a scene which the youth was loth to leave by taking his own life.

But he was determined not to allow his step-father to strike him, and had made up his mind firmly to take the leap.

"By Heaven, but I'll take the chances," cried the man, maddened by the bold attitude of the boy.

Then, with a loud cry, he staggered back, for the youth had quickly turned, hesitated an instant, and then taken the leap.

With his hands covering his ears, to shut out the fatal crash upon the brick walk below, the man stood an instant, his face livid, his eyes staring.

Then he tottered toward the window, impelled by an impulse which he could not resist.

Again from his lips broke a cry, and back into his face rushed the color, for he beheld the youth quickly climbing down the tree and apparently unharmed, for he had made the mighty leap, caught upon the branches, and thus saved his life.

The scene once more maddened the man, and he shouted:

"You shall not escape me, you young scamp."

The boy laughed, and the man hastened from the room.

In a minute's time he reached the outer door to behold the youth flying like a deer down toward the sea-shore.

Calling to several servants to follow him, he started in pursuit.

But the runaway was nimble-footed, and ran at a pace that quickly brought him to the little pier, at which a small sail-boat had just landed.

A youth of eighteen sprang ashore, and was about to make fast the painter, preparatory to lowering sail, when he beheld the boy coming, and behind him his pursuers.

"What have you been doing now, Bob, that

the governor is chasing you as a man-of-war would a pirate!" said the young man with something of a sneer.

"He accused me of stealing the money which I saw you take, Walter, and swore that he would make me confess.

"Come, get out of the way, for I want that boat."

"Stop him, Walter, for he is a thief," yelled the man, out of breath.

"I'll do it," said the youth addressed as Walter.

But, as he spoke he received a stunning blow full in the face, and dropped like a log upon the pier.

Having thus prevented his step-brother from doing him any harm, Bob sprung into the sail-boat, shoved off, and the wind catching the sail sent the little craft gliding away just as the man and several servants reached the pier.

"Spring into that row-boat there, and with this light wind you can easily catch him," shouted the man.

"You had better not, for Walter left his fowling-piece on board, and I shall use it," shouted the boy, as he held up a shot-gun he took from the seat.

This deterred the servants from obeying their master, and in fact they loved Bob and did not wish to see him fall into the hands of his cruel step-father.

"Cowards! go to the fishing-hamlet up the coast and send Sailor Sam in his smack after yonder runaway," ordered the man, and the servants obeyed, while their master aided his son to rise, for he was now recovering from the stunning effects of the blow given him by Bob.

But darkness was now falling upon the sea and land, and out of the west rolled up huge dark clouds that betokened a severe storm, so that the fishermen refused to put out in the face of it, though all predicted that the daring boy runaway would be lost when it should break in its fury upon the waters.

CHAPTER II.

THE WRECK.

My young hero, Robert Haslam, or "Bob" as he was familiarly called, was a good sailor, having been on the waters since his baby years almost, and learned much in his cruises with the hardy fishermen of the coast.

He knew that he saw well able to take care of himself and the little craft; but he did not like the storm he saw so rapidly rising.

He stood straight out to sea, and felt assured that the servants would not dare to follow him in the face of the rising storm.

It was a league down the coast, he well knew, before he could find a landing on the rocky shores, and yet he felt if he landed, he would at once be seized by his step-father, or those under his pay, so he determined to keep out to sea and seek some port if he could.

He had risked the terrible leap from the window, and he would risk the storm.

"I would die before he should strike me; and it is not a hard death to be drowned," he muttered, gazing coolly into the dark depths and then glancing at the rising storm.

As the darkness shut him out from the land

he luffed up, lowered his sail and close reefed it.

Then he made all ship-shape to meet the blow, and raising sail again began to cruise along the coast, intending to seek some port during the night.

Fortune seemed to favor the brave boy, for the storm broke with less fury just where his little craft was, than elsewhere, and though it was threatened with destruction a score of times, it lived through the tempest, but was driven by it at great speed directly out to sea.

For several hours the blow lasted, and then the storm-clouds swept away, the moon arose in beauty, and the little craft went driving along over the rough waters before a ten-knot breeze, but no longer in danger of going down.

Bob knew that he was now leagues away from the land; and felt that few would believe he had ridden out the gale.

"Let them think me dead."

"It is better so, while I seek a new home and new friends somewhere else."

"I will see some out-bound ship to-morrow and take passage on her."

So the boy determined, and he held on his course still further away from the land, as though reckless of consequences.

All night long he held the tiller, and when day dawned gazed wistfully over the waters for a sail.

But not a vessel was in sight.

He was alone in his little boat upon the waters.

It had been the habit of his step-brother to often cruise along the coast, shooting sea-fowl, and upon such occasions he had always taken a hamper of provisions with him.

Such a hamper was now in the locker, and a generous supply of food met Bob's eyes, sufficient to last a couple of days.

"If I only had some money I'd be all right," muttered Bob, as he ate his breakfast from the hamper.

Hardly had he spoken when his eyes fell upon a dark object forward among the timbers.

Quickly he seized it, and cried:

"It is the stolen wallet, and Walter hid it here, while the waters washed it out of its hiding-place."

"Well, if I took it back now they would not believe me, but say I had it with me."

"I did not steal it; but as chance has placed it in my hands, I will use it, for the money belongs to my mother really, and not to that man, for he has nothing more than she gives him."

"Yes, this is lucky, for there are one, two, three—yes, ninety pounds here, and Walter has taken ten," he said, counting the contents of the wallet.

"Well, I will use it, and some day return the money to my mother, who I know will grieve for me deeply, believing me lost at sea."

"I wish there was some vessel in sight, for I don't like being at sea alone," and again he cast his eyes about the horizon.

But no vessel was in sight far or near.

All day long his little vessel sped on, and once more darkness came on.

The sea was comparatively quiet, and worn out, Bob lowered his sail and laid down to rest.

It was hours before he awoke, and the mid-night hour had passed.

The waning moon had risen, and lighted up the sea.

Glancing around him, the boy started, for his eyes fell upon a dark object not very far distant.

"It is a vessel's hull, for she has not a mast or spar visible; but some one must be on board of her," and raising sail Bob stood down toward the drifting hull.

In twenty minutes he was alongside, and clambering over the bulwarks.

The vessel was deserted, and the craft seemed to have seen hard usage, for the masts and bowsprit were gone, the bulwarks stove in, and the decks swept clean.

"I hope all were not lost on board," said Bob in an awed tone, as he went toward the cabin.

A swinging-lantern burned in the cabin, and the scene that it fell upon caused the startled boy to quickly retrace his way to the deck.

CHAPTER III.

THE SAILOR BOY.

THE sight that met the eyes of young Robert Haslam was one he will never forget to his dying day.

The vessel had evidently been caught in a storm, so severe that crew and passengers had nearly all been swept off her decks, or deserted her in the boats.

But there yet remained half a dozen on board, and it was upon these that the eyes of the boy had fallen.

Whether they had in their despair, drank to madness and then ended their own existence, or fought to the end of their own lives he could not tell; but there, under the glimmer of the lamp lay a ghastly heap, blood-stained and stiff in death.

It was a sight that drove the boy in haste from the cabin, and, springing into his little boat he again sailed away over the waters, preferring to be alone upon the deep, than remain upon a wreck whereon were the dead only.

All through the night the boy thought over the horror of the scene he had beheld; but the sun rising brightly the shadows left his heart, and once again he became an earnest watcher for a sail.

Once he spied a vessel and tried to head so as to attract the attention of those on board; but it was useless, for the craft passed on its way without beholding the little sail-boat, and hope almost died in the brave boy's heart as another night came on.

His provisions were now gone, his little water-flask empty, and he began to suffer from want of rest, little food and exposure.

Another night dragged its weary length along, and the following day broke blustering and threatening.

But Bob kept up hope until the shadows of another night were upon him, and the rain came down in torrents, drenching him to the skin.

"It looks as though I must die," he said as he shrunk down in the cockpit, hungry and shivering.

And thus he crouched through the night, his

boat buffeted about by the wind and waves, until, when the dawn came he could hardly raise his head, and was full of aches and burning with fever.

Suddenly his eyes fell upon a sail and his parched lips uttered a cry.

A large clipper-ship was not far distant, and heading right down upon him.

He tried to rise and hail her, but he had not the strength, and sunk fainting into the cockpit.

But the lookout at the mast-head had already caught sight of the little craft, and he had shouted to the deck:

"Sail-boat ho!"

There in the ocean to behold that little boat created an excitement on the stately ship, and it luffed sharp and lay to, while a boat was quickly lowered.

Ten minutes after, the poor boy was in a comfortable berth in the cabin, and the kind-hearted captain was attending to him with the skill of a surgeon and the gentleness a mother might have shown.

It was long days before Bob rallied and became himself once more, and then he found that he was on board the clipper-ship *Indian Prince*, bound out of Liverpool to China.

He did not tell the reason why he had left home, but simply said that he had sailed away from the shore and had been caught in a storm that blew him out to sea.

The captain offered to speak some in-going vessel they might meet, and let him return on her to England, but Bob said no, and further, requested that he might be allowed to serve as a sailor or cabin-boy for the remainder of the long cruise.

The captain granted his request, and as soon as he was able Bob went to work as a sailor-boy, and when the vessel arrived at her destination was a favorite with all on board the *Indian Prince*.

Arriving in port, and liking the life of a sailor, Bob shipped on board the American barque *George Washington*, bound to Boston, to the regret of the clipper's captain and crew, who hoped that he would remain with them.

But Bob had no idea of returning to England to fall again into the clutches of his step-father, and besides he wished to visit the United States.

So he bade adieu to those who had been his friends, and sailed as cabin-boy in the Boston-bound barque.

CHAPTER IV.

A CABIN BOY'S PLUCK.

It was a dark, stormy night upon the Atlantic and threatening clouds were looming up heavier and heavier that betokened still harder struggles for the brave craft that was daring the winds and waves.

It was the stanch barque in which young Robert Haslam had shipped as a cabin-boy in far-away China.

Bravely over the long leagues of boundless waters the good ship had held its way, facing the dangers of the deep, and now was within a few days of the haven she sought, when she was caught in a severe storm at nightfall, and

which increased in violence as the hours passed on.

Throughout the long voyage Bob had made friends with all on board, for he was ever willing to lend a helping hand, from doing extra service in the Cook's caboose to going aloft in a gale.

The few passengers on board also found him most willing to serve them, and the boy had become a favorite with all.

As the storm increased in fury, a passenger came upon deck to gaze out upon the scene of darkness around him upon every side.

Just then a huge wave boarded the bark, which lurched fearfully, and the passenger was carried off upon the waters.

"Man overboard!" shouted a voice that pierced above the storm, and instantly the one who gave the cry leaped overboard.

"Man overboard!" echoed a seaman, and the cry went along the decks until a stern order was given to lay the vessel to, and volunteers were called for to—

"Lower away a boat to save them!"

Willing and brave hearts were in the work, and the life-boat was soon bounding upon the waters, searching for the one who had been swept overboard, and he who had so pluckily gone to his rescue.

"Ho the life-boat!"

The cry arose from the waters, and, with a cheer, the crew of the life-boat pulled hard in the direction from whence came the hail.

"Whereaway?" called out the mate in charge, unable to see anything in the darkness.

"Here we are, but hurry up, for we can't hold out long."

The words were spoken with the utmost coolness, that showed the speaker was not unnerved in spite of his danger.

"It is Sailor Boy Bob," cried the mate.

"Yes, it is Bob's voice," responded the coxswain, and the next instant the life-boat was at hand.

"Here, take him in first, for he can't swim," cried Bob, and the passenger was dragged into the boat, and the boy instantly followed.

"Bob, I owe you my life," said the passenger, as the boat started on its return to the vessel.

"I saw the wave take you over, sir, and having heard you say that you could not swim, I jumped after you," modestly responded the boy.

"Well, you saved me from death, Bob, and I am not one to forget the favor," was the reply of the passenger, and he grasped the hand of the youth as the boat ran alongside of the ship and was greeted with a cheer from the crew.

CHAPTER V.

A FEARFUL SORROW.

UPON his arrival in Boston Bob found the passenger whose life he had saved more than willing to help him, and being urged to accompany him to his home in the West, the boy consented, for he felt strangely lost and lonely after leaving the bark, where he had lived so

long, and aboard which he had seen only friendly faces.

The name of the passenger was Brent Hastings, and he told Bob that he had been called to China to settle up the estate of a brother who had died there.

He furthermore said that his home was in Iowa, where he had a large stock-farm, and that his family consisted of a wife and daughter.

Bob loved horses, and being told that he should have charge of the stock, he determined to give up the life of a sailor, at least for the present, and see how he liked living ashore.

With this determination he accompanied Mr. Hastings to the West.

The home of the farmer was not very far from the Missouri river, and the locality, at that time was wild and desolate, while there was considerable danger of Indians making raids upon the settlements.

Knowing these facts, and having been absent for many long months, Mr. Hastings was most anxious about those at home, an anxiety which had been increased by receiving no letters from his wife and his partner in the farm, upon his arrival in Boston.

Those were not days of rapid travel, as we have now, and railroads did not extend across the prairies of Iowa, so that the journey was a long one.

But Bob enjoyed it immensely, liked the camping out at night, the rides and hunts by day, and hoped that he would soon be able to see the Indians about whom he had read so much in England.

At last the farmer and his boy *protege* drew near home, and ascending a roll in the prairie, Mr. Hastings said:

"There, Bob, is my home, and where you are to live in the future."

He pointed as he spoke, to a cosy log cabin nestling away in the shelter of a range of low hills, and with barns and outbuildings about it, stacks of hay and cultivated fields surrounding it, and with herds of cattle roaming the prairie, giving the idea of a home of comfort.

The farmer gave a sigh of relief as he saw his home still prosperous, when he had seemed to dread that he would find charred ruins, and the two rode rapidly on.

But at the gate a man met them whose face was strange, and he asked who and what they were.

"I am Brent Hastings, the owner of this farm, and my family dwell here," said the farmer.

"Ah, yes! I have heard of you, and know that you had an interest in this place; but your partner sold out to me, and has gone."

"Sold out to you?" gasped Brent Hastings.

"Yes; had he not the right?"

"Yes, legally, I gave him full rights."

"Well, that settles it, for I bought, and paid for the place."

"But where has he gone?"

"To Salt Lake."

"Good God! and my family?"

"Your wife and child accompanied him."

The poor farmer reeled in his saddle, turned livid, and muttered:

"Can this be true?"

"Yes, and I have since learned that she married him."

"Oh, God, this is terrible! But I shall have revenge for this."

"Curses on you, Kit Pinkerton, for you have made me a beggar, and stolen from me my loved wife and little daughter. But I will yet be avenged."

With a face black with passion, Brent Hastings, the beggared man and wronged husband and father, wheeled his horse and dashed away across the prairie.

One moment the amazed youth gazed after him, and then he too rode swiftly away in pursuit of his wretched friend, and as he rode along, Bob muttered:

"It would have been better had he drowned that night of storm than live to feel such sorrow as has fallen upon him."

CHAPTER VI.

BOB HASLAM'S PLEDGE.

BRENT HASTINGS had nearly reached the train with which he had been traveling westward when Bob overtook him and brought him to a halt with a kind word of sympathy.

"This is fearful, Mr. Hastings, that you have heard, and to be robbed of wife, child and home, by one you deemed your friend, nothing could be worse; but bear up, and I will aid you to seek those you love, and bring that man to justice."

"Ah, Bob, you do not understand law in these wild parts, for there is no justice in law against that Mormon devil, Kit Pinkerton, as I now know him to be."

"I felt that he respected that accursed creed, but I little dreamed that he would ever be the snake in the grass which he has proven himself."

"That man I have befriended and aided through life, Bob."

"I saved his life, gave him a home with me, and he made a little money by speculation, and I sold him a partnership in my farm."

"When I left for China, I gave all into his keeping, and see the result."

"It is fearful," and the strong man shook with emotion.

After a pause he continued:

"Come, Bob, we will go back to the train and get my ambulance."

"The things in it which I had purchased for those at home, I will sell to the train-people, along with the ambulance and one of the mules, while we will keep the other as a pack-animal, and start further west, for I believe you will accompany me, Bob."

"I will never desert you, sir, after all your kindness to me; but where are you going after leaving the train?"

"We will go to Salt Lake, Bob," was the stern reply, and the boy well knew that Brent Hastings intended to devote his life to revenge.

It was not exactly the life that Bob had anticipated leading in the West, but then he was an adventurous youth, and was not the one to

desert the man who had befriended him, and who was now cast down with almost despair.

He had learned to ride from earliest boyhood, and had been noted in England as the most daring rider that ever followed the hounds across country.

Then he was also a good shot with rifle and pistol, and as strong as a young lion, while his pluck had been tested on too many trying occasions to cause him to fear for himself in danger, come what might.

His experience thus far in western life had been an exciting one, and he was more than willing to follow wherever Mr. Hastings would lead, for he was indeed, the only friend he had in America.

Therefore he said firmly, grasping the hand of the man, as they rode back to the emigrant train with which they had come across the prairies from Chicago:

"I give you my pledge, sir, not to desert you, and though a boy makes it, the pledge shall not be broken."

"I believe you, my boy, and God bless you," was the fervent reply of Brent Hastings, who in one short hour had had so much of sorrow fall upon him.

CHAPTER VII.

BOB'S FIRST BATTLE.

HAVING determined upon his course, Mr. Hastings quickly disposed of his ambulance and the things that he did not need, and using one of the draught animals as a pack-horse, he took with him just such things as would be needed in the trip into the western wilds.

The people of the train wondered at the strange move on the part of their fellow-traveler; but he offered them no explanation, and left camp with Bob, after a hasty farewell.

Mr. Hastings was certainly a thorough plainsman, and had been the leader of a band of men in his neighborhood, who had leagued together to protect themselves from the Indians and horse-thieves.

He knew the trails well, was a good scout, had trailed and fought Indians until he was posted upon all their tricks, and could take care of himself in desperate emergencies, as he had often done.

He was well armed with a Colt's repeating rifle and revolvers, and Bob carried a double-barreled half rifle, half shot-gun, with a pair of repeaters, so that they felt they were a match for any small party of foes they might meet.

Their horses were fine beasts, the pack-animal was a good traveler, and their pack contained ample ammunition, provisions, blankets, a small tent, and cooking utensils, so that they were thoroughly prepared for a long march.

Bob really enjoyed the situation, though he felt deep pity for his friend, and noted his stern face, growing sad and more determined each day, with a sympathy he showed in every way in his power.

Crossing the Missouri, they held on their way along the Platte, intending to continue on until they struck the Overland trail for Salt Lake, for straight to that stronghold of the Mormons did Mr. Hastings intend to go.

How he could rescue his wife from the power of the villain who had won her from him, he did not know; but he was determined to see her, beg her to fly with him, and if she refused he would then kidnap their child and take her at least from the baleful influence of Mormonism, while, at the same time he would strike at the heart of Kit Pinkerton.

He knew well the terrible risk he ran; but life held for him no charm then, and he was willing to sacrifice it to get his revenge.

This much he told Bob, and the youth promptly pledged himself to stand by him through all.

Together then, impressed with the dangers of their daily trail overland, and the more dangers they must face, should they reach their destination in safety, they plodded on their way.

They killed ample game for their wants, camped early and started late, so as not to push their horses too hard, and, to while away the time and drown thought, Mr. Hastings would teach Bob all that he knew of prairie and woodcraft, and the wiles of Indians, horse-thieves and red-skins.

One afternoon as they were riding along, Mr. Hastings quickly came to a halt.

"What is it?" asked Bob, as he saw his friend gazing fixedly at the ground.

"See if you cannot find out."

Bob at once set to work, and soon said:

"Yes, it is a trail."

"True; but who made it?"

"Indians."

"Yes; but when?"

Bob examined the ground closely, and then answered:

"I would say that it was made only an hour or so ago."

"Right again; but what is to be done?"

"The trail heads due north, so we had better lean southward!"

"You are right, Bob, for we are too few to meet this crowd of red-skins, and we will have to look sharp that we don't run upon them somewhere, for I am convinced that there are more of them in the neighborhood."

The two friends now continued on their way, and Bob kept constantly on the alert, looking about him upon every side.

In one of his glances back over his shoulder he started, and an exclamation broke from his lips, which caused Mr. Hastings to quickly look around.

"Hal! there they are, and almost upon us."

"Ride hard, Bob!" he cried, as he beheld, not two hundred yards away, and evidently trying to slip upon them unseen, half a score of Indian warriors, mounted and in full war-paint.

It needed no further urging for Bob, and the three animals were urged into a run, the pack-horse keeping up well.

Seeing that they were discovered, the red-skins uttered wild yells, and bounded on in pursuit.

The Indians seemed to feel confident of their strength, and urged their horses on at full speed; but Brent Hastings and Bob held their own, without driving their animals to their

hardest, and the pack-horse kept up well, seemingly without distress.

"We must not break our horses down, Bob, by holding this pace," said Mr. Hastings, calmly.

"How can we help it?" answered Bob, not at all excited by the position in which he had found himself.

"I will show you."

"Do you see yonder clump of timber?"

"Yes, sir."

"We will halt there and give fight."

"I am willing."

"Then let us push our horses to their utmost for the mile to the timber, and that will give us time for work."

The animals were accordingly urged more rapidly on, and at once began to drop the Indian ponies, greatly to the chagrin of the warriors, who yelled like demons.

At last the clump of timber was reached, and the two whites threw themselves from the backs of their panting steeds.

There were hardly two score of trees there, and some of these had been chopped down by campers; but these, already cut in logs, formed a good barrier, which Hastings and Bob lost no time in throwing up as a breastwork.

A sink in the ground also furnished a retreat for the horses, which were hopped and thrown down upon their sides, so that they were below the danger-line from the arrows of the Indians.

The red-skins were now charging rapidly on; but Hastings opened with his repeating-rifle, and after dropping an Indian and a couple of ponies, the others drew up quickly and fled beyond range.

"Fill up the canteens at the spring yonder, Bob, while I reload," coolly said Brent Hastings, and the youth quickly obeyed.

Seeing his intention, the red-skins again charged, yelling like fiends; but Bob went on to the spring, filled the canteens, and then threw his gun to his shoulder, and quickly touched both triggers.

The first barrel sent a shower of buckshot into the mass of red-skins, and the second hurled a bullet through the brain of the chief of the band.

"Bravo, Bob! Quick, back to shelter and use your revolvers, for they are mad devils now!" yelled Mr. Hastings.

Bob sprung back to cover, dropped his gun and the canteens, and Mr. Hastings having also emptied his rifle, the two opened with their revolvers, for the red-skins were now not thirty paces distant.

Both fired with coolness and rapidity, and the Indians could not withstand the hot firing, so broke and fled, leaving five of their party dead upon the field, and six ponies.

"That settles them, Bob, for they will not return; but come, let us get our trophies, and encourage the red fiends to keep on going," and leading his horse out of the little fort, Mr. Hastings hastily reloaded his rifle and sprung upon him, his example being followed by Bob.

"We will show them that we are not hurt, Bob, so that they will not dare come back," said Mr. Hastings, and he sent a few shots after the

“flying red skins, and then turned back to look at the dead.

Bob had already halted by the side of a dead red-skin, and was gazing curiously down upon the painted face, still in death, and with a feeling of awe, too, for it was the chief whom he had killed, when he heard a shot, and felt a stinging sensation in his shoulder.

Turning quickly, he beheld a red-skin near him, and whom he had believed to be dead, rolling in agony, while a puff of smoke was curling from the muzzle of Brent Hastings's rifle.

“That fellow was not as dead as he looked, Bob, and I just turned in time to see him about to send an arrow through your back—see, the shaft has cut through your coat-sleeve, just grazing the skin.”

“It was a narrow escape, Mr. Hastings, and he would have killed me but for you, and I thank you, sir.”

“Nonsense, Bob, I need no thanks from you.

“But scalp your game and let us camp for the night.”

“Scalp the game?”

“Yes, for I am in a humor to take scalps now, though I never did such a thing before in my life,” said the man bitterly.

“I do not want their scalps, Mr. Hastings, and would not mutilate the dead.”

“I will then, Bob,” was the cool reply, and Brent Hastings tore off the scalp-locks in a way that made Bob shudder, and then, securing the traps of the red-skins, rode back to camp, where the youth set to work to build a fire and prepare the evening meal, pondering the while over his first battle.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DESERTION.

FOR some days after the fight with the Indians, the two friends went on their way without further adventure of importance, though they constantly saw signs of Indians and were daily and nightly in danger of meeting them.

Mr. Hastings seemed to grow daily more moody, and seldom spoke unless when addressed a direct question by Bob.

The youth saw that the poor man was brooding over his woes, and felt for him most deeply; but there was nothing he could say that would lessen his sorrows or give comfort, so he too, in turn, became silent, until the silence between them grew painful.

One night, after a hard day's ride, they camped under the shelter of a hill; and Brent Hastings said that, for their better safety, they would keep watch.

He offered to take the first part of the night, and promised to call Bob when his turn came.

Worn out as he was, the boy rolled himself in his blankets and sunk into a deep sleep.

How long he slept he did not know; but at last he woke to find that the fire had burned low, and all was silence about him.

Convinced that it was after midnight, when he should be on watch, Bob arose and went in search of his friend.

He was not at his post, and nowhere could he find him.

Calling aloud, he received no answer.

Then he went to where the horses were staked out, in a small glen not far away.

His horse and the pack-animal were there, but Brent Hastings's steed was missing.

“What can it mean?” muttered Bob, in alarm.

Again he searched, and searching, wondered.

But neither search nor wonder would find the missing man.

In dismay, Bob feared that he had been unable to stand his sorrows, and had put an end to his own life.

But then, why should he ride off to do so?

Returning to the fire, he threw on an armful of brush and sat down to think.

As the fire blazed up, Bob beheld a stick stuck in the ground near by, and having fastened to it a slip of paper.

This would solve the mystery of his friend's disappearance he was assured, and quickly he seized it and read as follows:

“MY DEAR YOUNG PARD:—

“I have felt that I had no right to drag you along with my unhappy destinies, and perhaps get you killed in some fight with Indians, or escaping that, to see you die by torture among the Mormons, should they discover my intentions.

“So, Bob, I have determined to desert you, and go on my way alone.

“Due south from our camp, three miles about, I observed camp-fires to-night, and going there, I discovered a large train of emigrants encamped.

“They are going to Denver, doubtless, and you must accompany them, and then decide as to your future.

“I leave you the pack-horse, and take only such provisions and things as I actually need.

“I also leave you, my boy, a hundred dollars, one fifth of all I have, and with it you have my every wish for your success and happiness in life.

“Now, Bob, I bid you farewell, with the hope that I may be successful, and in that case I will look you up, so send your address, wherever you are, to the postmaster at Iowa City, Iowa, and from him I will get it.

“If you do not hear from me, you will know that I have lost my life, and that in that case I will no longer suffer.

“Seek the train at once, Bob, and, again let me say, may every success attend you.

“Your unhappy friend,

“BRENT HASTINGS.”

Such was the letter that Bob received, and he read it over and over again with deep emotion, until his feelings almost overcame him.

The money was pinned to the paper, and there was, he found, upon looking over the pack-saddle, very little that Hastings had taken with him.

“Poor man, he has done this for me; but I am not afraid to take all the chances he was to meet.

“He is the only friend I have in America, and I will not be thrown off this way, if he does act for my good.

“Let me see what time it is—ah! dawn is just breaking, and I know that the camp-fires of the train, which I can see yonder, were not there when I went to bed.

“That was about eight o'clock, and Mr. Hastings discovered them when the train halted and went into camp, which I will say was about nine.

"Then he went there and back, and it must have taken him two hours, so that I will call it twelve when he left, and it is about four now."

"Come, horses, we will follow the trail of the only friend we have, and not allow him to shake us this way, for fear we may be hurt."

So saying Bob heartily ate some breakfast, watered his horses, and saddling up, mounted and rode out of camp, easily following the trail of Brent Hastings's horse, for his hoofs had brushed the dew from the grass.

Believing that Bob would do as he had urged, it seemed that Hastings had made no effort to cover up his trail, and bringing his new learning in prairie-craft to his aid, the youth followed rapidly on, his face brightening with the prospect of success and again meeting the man to whom he had become deeply attached in the time that they had been together.

CHAPTER IX.

THE YOUNG TRAILER.

BOB pushed on at as rapid a pace as he cared to force his horses, but soon found that the trail did not freshen, and this convinced him that Mr. Hastings was going on at a good gait.

He knew that he was superbly mounted, and that he would have some difficulty in coming up with him before nightfall.

Should night come on, and the man be yet not in sight, Bob doubted almost his ability to overtake him; so he urged his horses still harder, after an hour's halt at noon for rest and food, which he knew the animals must have.

Over the prairie, here and there broken with woodland, and at the same swinging pace, Bob held on his way, his eyes fixed on the horizon ahead, hoping to see it broken by the sight of a horse and rider.

At length, just as the shadows began to lengthen, with the declining of the sun, Bob came quickly to a halt, his eyes narrowly searching the ground beneath his feet.

What attracted his attention was another trail than that which he had been following.

It was the trail of two horsemen, and coming northward, turned abruptly into that left by the horse of Brent Hastings.

Bob had learned enough of signs on the border to see that Indian ponies had not left the tracks beneath his feet, for the hoofs were shod—a sure indication that the horses were ridden by white men, or, if by red-skins, they had been stolen by them.

Bob hoped that they were white men, believing in that case they would prove to be friends.

So on the trail he went, and just at sunset he came in sight of those he followed.

He would have ridden boldly on, had not the actions of the two men appeared strange; and having learned to be cautious, he quickly drew back over the roll of the prairie, dismounted, and peered cautiously at them.

They had dismounted, and were lying down, watching something visible over a rise of land.

Bob saw there a clump of timber, but could not see the ground at the base of the trees.

The men, however, evidently could see right into the timber, and were watching with evi-

dent interest something that was going on there.

They certainly could tell by the trail they had followed that there was only one person before them, and why all this caution, when they were two, the boy wondered.

Then a column of smoke curled up from the trees, showing that whoever was there was building a fire, and had doubtless gone into camp for the night.

It was now growing dark, and Bob saw the two men unsaddle and stake their horses out, as though they intended to remain where they were.

Then they looked to their weapons, and just as it grew dark went slowly over the rise.

Instantly Bob remounted his horse and rode on toward the timber.

He avoided the staked-out horses of the men, and approached the glimmering fire from a different direction from that in which the men were coming.

Dismounting, he staked his horses out, and, in a bending posture ran quickly toward the clump of trees.

He gained the edge unseen, and beheld a small fire, with a man seated by it eating his supper.

That man was Brent Hastings.

In the trees stood his horse, saddled, and feeding, which showed that the halt of the rider was not for the night, but only for a rest of one hour or so.

But where were the two men he had seen?

Certainly they had had time to reach the spot.

Bob was about to go on and join his friend, when he caught sight of two dark forms out upon the prairie.

They were not sixty paces distant, moving slowly toward the timber, at a point near where he stood, and it was evidently their intention to remain unobserved.

Determined to see what their little game was, Bob shrunk back in the bushes, and just then the two men came up and halted within ten feet of him.

"There he is, Sam, so who shall pull on him, you or me?" said one.

"Oh, I'll do it, for I guess it'll pay if we only gits his weepins."

"Waal, let drive, an' we'll soon see what he hev got about his clothes," said the other.

Then the man, who had volunteered to play the part of a cowardly assassin, raised his rifle to his shoulder.

Another instant and the life of Brent Hastings would then and there be ended; but a flame shot out of the bushes, a crack of a revolver followed, and the intended assassin dropped dead in his tracks.

Then, before his frightened comrade could move even, he felt the pressure of cold iron against his forehead, and a voice cried hoarsely: "Move and you are a dead man!"

"Nary move then, pard, for I is struck on living," was the quick response.

All this had taken but a second in transpiring, and seeing that he had bagged his game Bob shouted:

"Ho. Mr. Hastings, come this way!"

Brent Hastings had sprung to his feet at the shot and darted to the side of his horse, out of the glare of the fire-light.

But, ere he had time to mount he heard the call, and cried eagerly:

"Bob Haslam's voice among a thousand!"

"Yes, I am Bob, and I want you," called out the boy, and throwing himself into his saddle, Brent Hastings galloped to the spot where Bob stood, his revolver-muzzle still pressed hard against the head of his prisoner.

"Well, Bob, my boy, we do meet again," cried the man, dismounting quickly and advancing toward the youth.

"Yes, sir, for I was determined that you should not desert me in that style, and followed you, and it is well that I did, for that man lying there was about to kill you, and this one is his pard, so we have them both."

Brent Hastings glanced at the dead man, and then turned upon the other, while he said:

"The best way to save trouble will be to kill you too."

"Pard, don't kill me, for I hain't guilty, and I have lost my comrade."

"Jist let me go, and I'll git like a skeert jack-rabbit."

"Jist try me," whined the man.

"Give me your weapons and go then!"

The man promptly obeyed and started to move off toward where they had left their horses.

"Hold on, sir, for I claim your horses, and will bring them into camp."

"Take that trail," said Bob, and he pointed in an opposite direction.

The man uttered a curse but obeyed, and then Bob called out:

"Here, come back and bury your comrade."

"Here is your knife, and a revolver to protect yourself."

The man returned to the spot and muttered:

"You hain't so bad as you look, leetle pard."

Bob made no reply, but walked away toward his own horse, tossing the knife and revolver upon the ground as he left.

Brent Hastings followed him, and the two then rode to where the two animals were lariat, and taking possession of them held on their way for a few miles, when they came to a secure camping-place for the night.

"So you would not let me go alone, pard Bob?" said Brent Hastings as the two sat around their little camp-fire.

"No, indeed, for I pledged myself to stand by you."

"Well, I'm glad you came on after me, Bob, for I was awful lonesome without you; but then I did not think it right to yoke your young life to mine, so gave you the slip."

"But we'll hang together, Bob, for good or evil."

"Good-night," and rolling himself in his blanket, Brent Hastings sought the rest he so much needed, and Bob quickly followed his example.

CHAPTER X.

THE CAPTURE.

UNDER even extraordinary circumstances, Brent Hastings would never have taken the chances of going across the plains as he did with only a comparative boy for a companion, when even large trains were in danger of capture either by the Indians or bands of Danites.

But, with the sorrow weighing upon his soul he was almost desperate, and wished to shun womankind.

For this reason he would not join any of the westward-bound Government or emigrant trains, and took the chances to reach his destination.

Bob hardly knew how desperate were those chances; but he was not one to back out under any circumstances, and really enjoyed the life of danger and hardship they led.

With the two extra horses, taken from the robbing murderers, they were enabled to rest their animals, and in this way, riding one and then the other horse, and also transferring the pack, they made quite rapid time, while Bob ingeniously manufactured dummy riders for the backs of the horses not ridden, which gave the appearance of five horsemen instead of two, and thus kept at bay several small bands of redskins who were not willing to take risks against so many hunters, as they believed.

Following the South Platte, they arrived, after weeks of travel, on the Colorado river, and went into camp one night in a canyon not far from the mouth of the Green.

Hastings knew well the danger he was in, but determined to press right on, claim to be a convert to Mormonism, pass Bob off as his son, and thus reach Salt Lake City.

A Mormon fort was not very far from his camp, but this he wished to avoid, being anxious to reach the town without attracting any more attention than was absolutely necessary.

He explained to Bob just who and what the Mormons were, and that there was a war threatening between them and Government troops, and expressed the hope that they would be utterly wiped out from the face of the earth.

While seated in the secluded canyon, not dreaming of any immediate danger, they were suddenly covered by a score of rifles, and stern and threatening came the words:

"Throw up your hands, or die!"

Both Hastings and Bob sprung to their feet, their hands upon their revolvers; but they saw at a glance that they were two to twenty, and were under the aim of rifles that would riddle them if they resisted.

"Up with your hands!" again came the stern command.

"Bob, we are done for, obey!" calmly said Hastings, and up went their hands above their heads.

Then two men stepped forward, and instantly disarmed them.

The men were dressed in black, wore masks, and were heavily armed with rifles, revolvers and knives.

"Who are you?" demanded Brent Hastings.

"That question is for us to ask you," was the response.

"I am a convert to Mormonism, and this is my son.

"We were going to Salt Lake to live there."

"Ah! many have told the same story to save their lives; but we will soon know if you tell the truth.

"Where are the rest of your party?"

"We are alone."

"No."

"I tell you the truth; we came alone from Iowa."

"You certainly had a guide?"

"No, I am a plain man, and followed the trails and the rivers."

"And you wish to become Mormons?"

"Yes."

"You are not United States Government spies?"

"No."

"Have you any family?"

"Not now, other than this boy."

"We are of the Mormon creed."

"So I suspected."

"We are Danites."

"Ah!"

"Yes, and it will fall to our lot to punish you if you deceive us."

"So be it."

"You do not know what Danite torture is?"

"I have heard stories of Danite torture."

"Did you ever hear of the Destroying Angels?"

"Yes."

"What have you heard of them?"

"That they were a band of Danites who hunted down all foes to the Mormons who dwelt in these parts."

"Yes, we do, for we are Destroying Angels, and our fort is near here."

"I will carry you to Red Rockwell, our chief, and it will rest with him what is to be your fate."

"Come!"

Without a word Hastings and Bob followed their captors, who allowed them to mount their horses, and, after a ride of a few miles through the darkness, they came upon a small fort, built of rocks and logs.

Through a stockade gate they were taken, and a moment after were bound securely and thrust into a log hut, cold and cheerless.

CHAPTER XI.

DESPAIR AND HOPE.

It was late the following morning when the door of the cabin was opened, and the two prisoners were led out.

They found themselves in a small, but strong fort, right in the hills, and with perhaps two-score of occupants.

They were taken to a large cabin standing in one corner of the fort, and told that the chief of the band would see them soon.

He saw them then, for he was eating his breakfast in the cabin as they approached.

But he took his time, and then lazily came out and approached the prisoners.

Unlike his men, he was unmasked, and was the only man in the band that the captives could see the face of.

He was a young man, with cold, blue eyes, a

firm mouth, wore no beard, and would have been handsome but for a look of cruelty that seemed to rest upon every feature.

He was dressed in black, wore a pair of revolvers and a bowie knife in his belt, and about his black slouch hat was a cord of gold, with a pin of the same metal looping up one side, and representing an angel with a flaming sword.

"You were captured in my territory last night?" he said in a voice that was strangely soft and pleasant.

"We were captured in United States territory last night by a band of men calling themselves Destroying Angels," answered Hastings.

"Yes; they were my men, and they capture all who invade the sacred land of the Mormon Prophet."

"What were you doing here?"

"I was going to Salt Lake City."

"For what purpose?"

"To ally myself with the Mormons."

"You tell this lie to save your life?"

"It is no lie, for I was going to Salt Lake, intending to become a Mormon."

"And this boy?"

"Is my son."

"Well, we will see if you can stand the test."

"Do you know any one in Salt Lake?"

"I have met a number of Mormons, but none that I particularly remember."

"Ah! perhaps then you remember this letter, for it was found among the boy's traps, and some two of the horses that you have with you belonged to two of my men."

"How did you get the animals?"

Both Hastings and Bob saw that they were cornered, for the letter was the one which had been written that night in camp, and it told that the destination of the writer was indeed Salt Lake; but then it showed that some deep personal motive carried him there.

"This letter tells enough to condemn you, my man, and now I wish to know how you got those two horses?"

"I followed on the trail of my friend, found an assassin about to kill him, and shot him."

"His comrade I made prisoner, but turned loose, while I kept their horses, and that is all there is about it," spoke up Bob.

"Well, there is enough about it, and about the secret intention of this man, in going to Salt Lake, to cost you both your lives."

"Guard, put these prisoners back in the cabin until I decide what I shall do with them," and the young chief of the Destroying Angels turned on his heel, while Hastings and Bob were again led back to their prison.

"Ah, Bob, my poor boy, I have led you to your death, I fear," groaned Brent Hastings.

"If you have to die, it will be no more for me than you, and I'll go under game," was Bob's plucky response.

"Yes, Bob, but we lose life, and those I loved so are utterly lost, in the power of these Mormon devils."

"Alas! I have no hope now, not even of revenge."

Bob saw that with despair Mr. Hastings would go all to pieces, so to speak, while, with the hope of rescuing his wife and daughter, and

getting revenge, he would keep up strength and courage, so to cheer him he said:

"Say, Mr. Hastings, did you notice that this prison isn't as strong as the London Tower?"

"It is strong enough to hold us, Bob."

"I don't believe it, for you just look up at the roof there."

"Well?"

"The logs, you see, are just laid on, and weather-boarding nailed over the logs."

"Yes."

"Well, I believe that we can pry up one end and get out."

"Impossible, Bob."

"Not if we can break one of those trunk-slats off and use it as a lever."

"I shall try to-night at any rate."

Brent Hastings shook his head doubtingly; but Bob had set his mind upon escaping, and at once became lost in deep thought.

After a long silence he said in a whisper:

"I tell you, Mr. Hastings, I have got an idea."

"Well, Bob?"

"Wait and see," was the quiet response of the youth.

CHAPTER XII.

BOB'S PLOT.

THERE was one thing certain in the minds of the two prisoners, and that was that Red Rockwell, the chief of the band of Destroying Angels, had no idea of releasing them.

The Danites showed no mercy to suspected foes in those days, and the presence of the man and boy in that locality alone, the story which Brent Hastings had told, and then the finding of the letter, which plainly contradicted that story, was proof enough against them that they were bent on some secret expedition in going into Utah.

Feeling assured that they would be punished, and doubtless put to death by torture, it devolved upon the two to concoct some scheme for escaping.

Bob's brain was busy all the time, and he thought of a hundred plots, and rejected them as useless.

But as night came on, his face suddenly brightened up as he was peeping through a crevice in the logs, and he whispered:

"The night guard has been placed, and he is armed to the teeth."

"Now to work!"

"But how, Bob?" asked Hastings.

"You lie down on the floor and groan, and I will call that man to your aid."

"And then?"

"Wait an' see," was the laconic response; and convinced that the boy had some good plot, Hastings said:

"I'll do as you say, Bob, and I guess you will pull us through."

"If this fails, we'll have to prize up that end of the roof."

"But now tip over and play that you have a fit."

Hastings promptly obeyed, falling heavily, and groaning and struggling terribly.

Bob gave a cry of alarm, and then called out:

"Guard! guard! is there a guard out there?"

"What do you want?" came in sullen tones from without.

"My pard has fallen in a fit! Quick! help him!"

The door was slowly unlocked and swung open, and a man stepped into the cabin.

He was masked, and heavily armed.

"I guess he'll be in luck if he dies," said the fellow, with a rude laugh, and he looked down on Hastings in his struggles, while he added:

"I can't leave post to call anybody, so let him kick it through the best way he can."

With this unfeeling remark he turned toward the door, when there came a whirring sound, a blow, and the man dropped senseless to the floor, felled by a board in the hand of Bob Haslam.

Quick as a flash Hastings was on his feet, saying quickly:

"You did that well, Bob; but is he dead?"

"I guess not; but we'll tie him and gag him."

"Yes; and get out of this at once."

The man was quickly stripped of his clothing, mask and arms, and as he was of large stature, Brent Hastings put on his clothes, and then the two left the cabin.

"Another guard will not go on duty before midnight, and it will give us a good start."

"But now for the fellow at the gate, and I hope he's small, so that his clothes will fit me," said Bob.

The two fugitives now started toward the gate, and walked boldly up to it, for they knew that the guard stood on the outer side.

Halting within, Bob waited, while Hastings, in his dress of a Danite stepped outside.

Listening, Bob heard a word or two pass, and then a dull thud, and Hastings stepped back, saying in a whisper:

"I hit him over the head with my revolver, and it stunned him."

"But see, Bob, he is a little fellow."

"Then his rig will just suit me," and Bob lost no time in putting on the guard's clothes and mask, at the same time appropriating his arms, after tying and gagging the fallen man securely.

"We must have horses, Bob."

"Yes, our own."

"But how to get them is the question?"

"They are in the stockade-pen at the back of the fort."

"Yes."

"There seems no way to get into it, except through the fort."

"We must see if there is."

Hastings boldly led the way back across the fort toward the stockade, where the horses of the band were put at night.

It adjoined the fort in the rear, and was several acres in size, while being in a vale, it was commanded from the works.

A gate led into the stockade corral, and through this the man and boy passed, seeing no one on the way, but hearing the voices of the men singing and talking in the cabins.

Saddles and bridles hung along the stockade wall, and selecting their own, Hastings and

Bob entered the corral and began the search for their horses.

These were soon discovered and while Hastings saddled them, Bob went round the stockade wall to find an opening.

In one corner, where a trail led to the flats and valleys below, he found a narrow gate, which would not have been detected from the outside, but was discernible from within by the bars and chains that held it fast.

Hastening back to his companion Bob made known his discovery, and, after considerable difficulty the gate was opened.

"Now, Bob, let us put rapid pursuit out of the question," said Hastings.

"How can we?"

"By taking with us all the horses."

"Good!" and Bob collected the different horses, staked out, and Hastings led them through the gate and tied them together outside.

There were some sixty animals, and it was no easy work to lead them quietly down the trail.

But it was accomplished at last, and by midnight the fugitives were many miles upon their way.

Arriving at a suitable place, they turned the horses loose, driving them in different directions in twos, threes and fours, until Bob said:

"It will be a smart man that tells which horses carried us on their backs, Mr. Hastings."

"Yes, Bob, it will indeed; but now let us push on, for we have a long road ahead of us."

"To Salt Lake?"

"Yes, to Salt Lake, Bob," was the quiet response.

CHAPTER XIII.

TRACKED.

SALT LAKE CITY was in a ferment, for a war was brewing between the Mormons and the United States troops.

The Danites, under unscrupulous leaders, had committed acts which the United States Government could not overlook, and the Mormon Prophet met all demands with defiance.

Emigrant trains had been attacked, settlers had been driven off from their homes, and even armed Government trains were not safe.

The Destroying Angels were a band whom all feared, and they were running riot in crimes of all kinds, until a climax had been reached which must precipitate a war.

Under such circumstances it was certainly a desperate undertaking on the part of Hastings and his boy pard to attempt to enter the city of the Mormons.

But Hastings was desperate, and Bob was daring enough to follow his lead.

So to Salt Lake they went.

Dressed in the well-known garb of the Destroying Angels they passed parties of Mormon troops, simply stating that they belonged to Red Rockwell's band, and were carrying dispatches to the Mormon chief.

By so stating they passed the outposts, and at last, worn out with hard riding, they found themselves at their destination.

Once before Hastings had been in the town, for a few days, when returning from California, and he knew something of the locality, so started to find a small inn where he had put up at his former visit.

The place was found, the horses were stabled, and the two friends were shown to a room.

"Now, Bob, we must seek some other disguise and pass as Mormons, for the Angels will not be long in making known the trick we played them and we will be hunted for."

"I am ready to do any thing you think best, sir," answered Bob.

"Well, we must go out as soon as we get dinner and look up some place where we can buy some clothing and play Mormon farmers."

"Then we must find a quiet place to put up, and leaving here to-night, change our clothes and go to our new quarters, where we can then search for those I came here to save."

"I am with you," pluckily said Bob, and the friends then went down to dinner.

After a hearty meal, which they sadly needed, they went out into the town and soon found a shop where they could purchase just what clothes they needed.

They also found here a false beard and wig of red hair, and, considering themselves in luck, returned to their inn.

As soon as it was dark they rode off, and seeking a secluded spot, they changed their clothes to those they had bought, and removing their masks, Bob put on the wig of red hair, while Hastings disguised his face under the false beard.

Having ascertained where there was a woman who took a boarder or two and had accommodations for horses, they went there, and were fortunate enough to secure a good room and stable accommodations.

Then Hastings went out alone and Bob retired to rest, for he was greatly fatigued after all that he had gone through.

It was midnight when Hastings entered the room and threw himself into a chair, tearing off his beard as though for air.

His coming awoke Bob at once, who sprung to his side, and said, quickly:

"What has happened, for you are as white as death?"

"They are here!" gasped the man.

"Who, the Destroying Angels?"

"No."

"Who, then?"

"My wife and child!"

"Ah!"

It was all that Bob could say.

After a moment Hastings continued:

"After leaving here I went up to the inn, and I there saw, face to face, the man whom I have sworn to kill."

"Pinkerton?"

"Yes, Kit Pinkerton."

"I hope you did not—"

"Oh, no, I did nothing rash, though I was tempted to then and there kill him!"

"But I knew well that it would thwart all, so I resisted the temptation."

"I am glad of that."

"Yes, Bob, and so am I; but having tracked

him here, it rested with me to track them, my poor wife and child.

"Pinkerton, I found, was a man high in authority here, and had been a Mormon for years.

"I waited around and found that Red Rockwell himself had arrived, and was searching for us.

"To shield himself, he did not tell how we had escaped, and how well your plot had worked; nor did he mention the clever trick we played on him.

"But he came in on the large white horse I wanted to take, so the animal must have gone back to the fort, or been found by him.

"He made no fuss about it, but simply said that two prisoners, a man and a boy, had escaped from his fort, and he was searching for them.

"I heard all he said, and I do not think he suspects us of coming here.

"But he offered a handsome reward for our capture, and then went up to head-quarters to see the Prophet, while I followed Pinkerton home.

"He lives not very far from here, and, when he had entered his home, I crept up to the window and looked in."

"And you saw—"

"My wife and child, Bob, and I have tracked them to the lair of that devil Pinkerton.

"Now I must plot to save them and you must help me."

"Here is my hand on it," frankly said the youth, and Brent Hastings knew that he had one true friend in the boy, upon whom he could wholly rely, and hope came to his breast that his daring invasion of the Mormon stronghold would bring back joy to his heart.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MORMON'S PLOT.

THE undertaking which Hastings had, with the aid of Bob Haslam, decided upon accomplishing, was, as the reader can see, a most desperate one.

To rescue a wife and child, who had gone to Salt Lake City with a Mormon, even against their will, was certainly a gigantic task to perform; but presumably, Mrs. Hastings had accompanied the villain from her own free will, inveigled into doing so by honeyed words.

Would she, having left her husband, be willing to return to him?

Would she not, having gone with Pinkerton as she did, still cling to him, and give her husband up to punishment, should he betray his presence to her?

Hastings thought not. He explained to Bob what a noble woman his wife had ever been, and felt assured that some dire influence had been brought to bear upon her to lead her away from him.

"Let me see her face to face, let me tell her of the enormity of her act, and gladly she will go back with me, if only to a log cabin to begin life anew," he said.

Bob was heart and soul with him in the good cause, and the following night accompanied Hastings on his visit to Pinkerton's house.

Obtaining a position from ~~them~~ they

could see into the highly-lighted rooms, Hastings said eagerly:

"Look, Bob! there they are!"

Bob beheld a woman seated at a table sewing.

Her face still was beautiful, but upon it rested a look of deep sadness.

She was well dressed, and, as she sat at her work, her thoughts seemed far away.

At the table also sat a child, and she was engaged in dressing a pretty wax doll she held in her hands.

She was a child of thirteen, and very like her mother, possessing the same large dreamy eyes, and refined features.

Bob was then nearly eighteen years of age, and he could readily appreciate how the poor father could feel to have those dear ones torn from him by one he had loved and trusted, and he did not wonder that Hastings sought revenge.

"I must save them, Bob, and when they are far from here, I will leave you to look after their safety, while I return to kill that man," hoarsely said Hastings.

"Let us first look to their safety."

"But how will you make known your presence to them?"

"I dare not show myself at once, for it would frighten them fearfully and perhaps ruin all."

"Let me go and knock at the door, and—"

"Yes, Bob, I leave all to you, so go, and when I am wanted simply beckon to me and I will see you and come.

"But break the news gently that I am here."

"Leave that to me," answered Bob, and he boldly marched up to the door and knocked, leaving Hastings crouching in the yard.

The little girl sprung to the door, with childish curiosity and opened it.

In stepped Bob, and bowing with courtly grace, he said:

"May I ask if this is the home of Colonel Pinkerton?"

"It is, sir," and the lady bowed.

"He is not at home then, madame?"

"No, nor do I expect him for several hours."

"I am glad of that, for I come really to see you, madam."

"To see me, sir?" and the lady looked at Bob with intense surprise.

"Yes, madam, if you are Mrs. Hastings, I have come to see you."

The woman started at the name, her face paled, and the little girl gazed searchingly at Bob.

"I was Mrs. Hastings, sir," she said hoarsely.

"And are not now?"

"I am now Mrs. Pinkerton, sir."

"But your husband, Mr. Hastings, what of him, may I ask?"

"He is dead, sir," and the eyes filled with tears, while the little girl said:

"Yes, my papa Hastings is dead, and Colonel Pinkerton is my papa now."

"There must be some mistake, madam, for I know Mr. Brent Hastings well."

"No, he was lost at sea, just eleven months ago, the vessel in which he sailed for China going down in a storm with all on board."

"And you believe this, madam?"

"Of course, sir, for I saw the notice of the vessel's loss, and my husband's name was published among the list of those who were drowned."

"The vessel did not sink, Mrs. Hastings, nor is your husband dead," said Bob calmly.

The woman uttered a cry, and springing toward him grasped his hands, while she said eagerly:

"Do you know this?"

"I do."

"Ah! God forgive me, what have I done?"

"You have simply married again, believing your husband dead, Mrs. Hastings."

"Heaven knows I believed him dead, and, so believing, I consented to become the wife of one whom he trusted, and who had been as a brother to me."

"He brought us here, and now I find out, alas! that he is a Mormon, and deceived me."

"I did not love him, for poor Brent had all my love, but he told me all we had my husband had mortgaged to him, and that he would be a kind father to my darling child here, poor little Eva."

"But he has deceived us, and now I find that I have been doubly deceived, and that my husband is not dead, while we are as prisoners here in this hated Mormon land," and Mrs. Hastings sunk down in her chair and wept convulsively.

"You have been cruelly deceived, dear lady, and by a villain," said Bob soothingly.

"In the first place he had that notice of the vessel's loss printed for your especial eyes, and kept from you letters which your husband had written you."

"Again, he told you a falsehood when he said he held a mortgage on your husband's property and urged you to marry him, to bring you here to Salt Lake, where he has other wives."

"But, Mrs. Hastings, your husband returned in safety to his home, and I accompanied him, to learn all that had happened."

"Then we tracked you here, and have come to save you and Eva."

"Thank God! thank God! But where is my husband, and will he forgive me?"

"He is here," and Bob stepped to the window and rapped on the pane.

In an instant Brent Hastings was in the room and his wife and child were in his arms.

But at that moment of joy to the stricken ones heavy steps were heard, and in stalked Kit Pinkerton and a comrade upon the scene.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FIGHT AND FLIGHT.

To say that Bob was surprised at the coming into the room of the two men would be to draw it mildly, for he was astounded.

But the youth was not one to lose his presence of mind, and he was ready for work the moment he heard Eva's warning cry:

"It is Colonel Pinkerton!"

Had there been any doubt as to what were the intentions of the man so unexpectedly returning to his home and finding one there

whom he had every reason to fear, he quickly set all doubt aside by drawing a revolver and firing upon Brent Hastings, while he was still locked in the embrace of his wife.

As quick as a flash Bob fired upon the Mormon to save his comrade's life. Pinkerton gave a cry, staggered backward, and fell heavily to the floor, while his companion, in alarm, fired several shots at random and bounded out of the door.

"Quick, Brent, for my sake fly and save your life!" cried Mrs. Hastings earnestly.

"Come with me!"

"No—no, that cannot be now, for we would be at once taken."

"Fly with this brave youth, join the American army that is marching here, and soon I will be with you."

"But they will harm you, and—"

"No, they will do me no harm; but if you remain all of us will die."

"Go, Brent, and come with the army, which certainly will conquer the Mormons."

"I will go, my dear wife, for I feel that then I can aid you, while to remain now would but destroy us all."

"Come, Bob!"

A hasty farewell, a glance at the form of his foe lying upon the floor, and Brent Hastings sprung away, followed by Bob.

In haste they ran to their abiding-place, saddled their horses, and putting their disguise as Danites on in the stable, mounted and rode rapidly toward the outskirts of the town, passing on their way a party of men hastening in the direction of Colonel Pinkerton's house, and led by the very man who had fled to save his life.

"God grant, Bob, that they do not harm my wife and child!"

"They will not do that, for Mrs. Hastings will tell some plausible story, you may be certain, sir. But what is the matter?"

"I feel strangely weak, and to tell the truth, Bob, I was wounded by Pinkerton's shot, and have been bleeding ever since but would not speak of it. See—I reel in my saddle."

"Let us see if we cannot check the flow of blood," and Bob drew rein.

But Brent Hastings would not hear of halting then, and they held on their way.

They passed the guards without difficulty, for they were taken for two of the band of Destroying Angels.

"Which way now?" asked Bob, and he little knew how important to him the question would be afterward.

"I will tell you, Bob, which way," slowly answered Hastings.

"My wife said truly that the American army must take Salt Lake, and it will. Now listen to me, and I will tell you just how to find the army under Johnson."

Then in a low tone Brent Hastings told Bob where to look for the United States forces marching toward Salt Lake City, and he was so explicit that the youth said:

"Why do you explain all to me, when you will go with me?"

Hastings answered calmly:

"Bob, something tells me that I will not go

with you—nay, that this is my death-wound that I have received.

"I am bleeding to death, slowly but surely, for there is no help near; and I wish to have you listen to all I have to say.

"And more, my dear Bob, I leave my wife and child to your keeping.

"You are but a boy in years, but you have a noble heart and a man's head and pluck, and I trust to you to take them from beneath the shadow now upon them.

"Somewhere, far from here, you can find for them a home; and in my effects, left in the bank at Iowa city, are papers that will give to my wife property that will bring her a small income.

"It is hard to place on your young shoulders the load that I do, Bob; but I feel that you will not shirk it when I am gone."

"I will do my duty, as you expect it of me, Mr. Hastings; but I cannot believe that you will die now."

"Bob, I do not believe that I have an hour to live.

"I am growing weaker every instant, and we will seek some place where we can halt with security."

They soon rode into a canyon, and finding a spot upon the bank of a mountain brook, Bob aided Hastings to dismount, and spread his blankets for him to lie upon.

Then he hastily gathered some wood and soon had a cheerful fire burning.

"Now let me see if I can help you," he said, drawing off the coat gently from the wounded shoulder.

It was but a tiny hole, but the bullet had gone deep, and the blood that had been flowing from it steadily had sapped the life of the strong man.

Had a surgeon been near, he might have saved the life of the wounded man; but, alone there in those wilds, with no help near, Brent Hastings knew that he must die, and Bob realized the sad truth also.

Lying back upon his blanket bed, the brave man awaited his doom, his hand clasping Bob's, and his lips articulating last words of advice and instruction to the boy about those he loved.

As gently as though he was sinking to sleep, Hugh Hastings's life left his body, and Bob Haslam was alone with the dead man in those dreary Utah wilds.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE YOUNG COURIER.

THE army of the United States, under General Albert Sydney Johnson, was moving by slow marches upon the Mormon stronghold.

It had encamped in a valley for a short while, to bring up its trains and send out scouting parties, and the scene was a most picturesque one, with the "prairie schooners" ranged in long rows, the white tents, the corrals of horses and cattle, and the soldiers moving about around the camp-fires.

Standing upon a spur of a hill overhanging the scene, was Bob Haslam, gazing with interest and admiration upon the camp.

In the background stood his own horse and the animal that belonged to Hugh Hastings.

It was just sunset, and the valley below was darkening already under the shadows of approaching night.

"Well, I have found the army at last," said Bob, and remounting his horse and leading the animal, he started down the mountain side by a rugged trail.

He had just entered the valley, when he was halted with the ringing words:

"Halt! who comes there?"

The speaker Bob did not see, for he was sheltered in a clump of bushes; but he knew it was a sentinel, and he answered promptly:

"A friend."

"Who are you?"

"A boy," was the laconic response.

"Where are you going?"

"To yonder military camp."

"Where are you from?"

"Salt Lake."

Bob heard an exclamation at the words which told where he was from, and then came the command:

"Dismount and advance!"

Bob quietly obeyed, and leading his horses, soon found himself confronting a soldier, who covered him with a musket.

"Well, you are a young one, that is a fact," said the soldier, as he gazed upon him in the lingering light of day.

"Yes, I am not very old; but I wish to see the commanding officer," answered Bob.

"Are you a courier?"

"No."

"What are you?"

"Just what you see, a boy."

"A Mormon?"

"No."

"Then what were you doing in Salt Lake?"

"I will tell that to the general, my man."

"Ah! well I will send you to him," and the sentinel gave a loud call, which was promptly answered by the appearance of a corporal and two men.

"Corporal, here is a young fellow that wishes to see the general."

"All right, I will conduct you to him," answered the corporal, and he led Bob toward the camp.

General Johnson sat in his tent looking over a map, by the aid of a lantern swinging above his head, and having given orders to admit the young visitor, he glanced up as Bob entered.

"Well, my young friend, you wish to see me I believe?" and the general spoke in a kindly tone, while he glanced upon the daring, resolute face of the youth, who politely doffed his hat, and said:

"Yes, General Johnson, I sought your camp to join you in your march to Salt Lake, from whence I have but just come."

"Ah!" said the general, seeing that Bob, though a boy, was one who had been used to good society, and spoke with the easy manner of a gentleman.

"You come from Salt Lake, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, that is just where I am going."

"But are you a Mormon youth?"

"I am not, sir, nor would I be for a fortune."

"That sounds well; but tell me what you were doing there?"

"First, let me tell you, sir, that Red Rockwell, at the head of his Destroying Angels, is now marching to a point where he can ambush one of the trains that you are waiting here for."

"Indeed! this is news of importance; but how do you know such to be the case?"

"I saw camp-fires last night and leaving my horse where I had pitched my quarters for the night, I went to see who had encamped there."

"I crept near and recognized Red Rockwell and his band."

"They were encamped on the bank of a small stream, and I saw that by going into the water, I could get near enough to hear what they were saying, for Red Rockwell and several of his men were looking at some papers."

"I stripped off my clothes and reached a spot within ten feet of them."

"You were daring indeed; but what did you discover?"

"I saw that they had a map, and on it, their words told me, was traced your line of march, with the trails that your different trains must follow."

"One train they spoke of as the ammunition-train, and said that it must be the first attacked."

"With it, I heard Rockwell say, there was a guard of forty soldiers, and some thirty teamsters, and if it was captured, he said your army would have to retreat."

"By Jove, he seems well informed, young man; but what then?"

"I counted the force of Red Rockwell and there were just sixty-two men, but he said that he would get Hickman and his thirty Danites to join them, and, by ambushing the train in the Wolf Den Canyon, they could kill all of the guards and capture it."

"My boy, you bring me indeed most valuable information, for that is the train I least dreaded would be attacked, from the trail it comes."

"But it will be due at the place of ambush selected by this Red Rockwell, to-morrow night, and I must act promptly to thwart him."

"Ho, orderly!"

An orderly appeared at the general's call.

"Ask Captain Crosman to come here at once."

The officer sent for soon made his appearance, and General Johnson told him of what news Bob had brought, and furthermore said:

"Captain, this young gentleman is an Englishman, and he has given me an outline of his history, and why he is just from Salt Lake, so that I have the fullest confidence in him."

"If I mistake him, then his face is a lie, for it shows that he is true as steel and I shall take it for his reference and offer him a position here at head quarters with me."

"I thank you, sir, and as I have two good horses, I would like the position of a messenger," said Bob.

"As courier, you mean, and you shall be

one, and you will disappoint my expectations if you do not make a name for yourself."

"But your life will be a hard one, and the rides you will have to make from head-quarters to trains, outposts to scouting-parties and such, will be full of peril."

"I accept the peril, General Johnson, with the position of courier, and thank you, sir," said Bob frankly, and he followed the orderly, who was told to show him his quarters in the camp.

CHAPTER XVII.

TAKEN A PRISONER.

BOB HASLAM had been one week in the service of General Johnson, and in that time men had come to know him as no ordinary person, in spite of his years.

He had in the games of the soldiers in camp, proven himself an athlete of superior qualifications, while he took the prize—a handsome horse, offered for the best rider.

Then, too, he was found to be a dead-shot with revolver and rifle, and no mean hand with the sword, he having taken fencing lessons when he was just in his teens.

One day when he was sitting in front of his tent, chatting with half a dozen men, an orderly came up and said:

"The general wishes you to report at once, sir, with your best horse and provisions for a two days' trip."

Bob sprang to his feet, and in ten minutes time he appeared at head-quarters.

"Bob, I have not a scout in camp at present that I care to send off, so I will call on you for a hard jaunt," said the general.

"I am ready, sir."

"I wish you to go to Fort Bridger and carry these dispatches."

"You have been studying up the geography of the country, and learning the trails, as I told you?"

"Yes, sir."

"And think you can make the run to Fort Bridger?"

"I can try, sir; if I fail it shall not be my fault."

"Well said, my boy, and I depend upon you to push through in all haste."

Bob took the papers, put them in his pocket, and saluting, left the tent.

Springing upon his horse, he dashed out of camp at a sweeping gallop.

He passed the sentinel with a pleasant nod, and as he rode along about a mile beyond, he caught sight of a man hastily spurring into some bushes growing alongside of the trail.

Bob did not show by any sign that he had observed the man, but rode on as though not fearing danger.

But he was very narrowly watching ahead, and he was on the alert to meet friend or foe.

He knew well that he might get a shot from an ambush; but then he did not think an enemy would be willing to risk firing so near the camp, and so he rode on, his revolver ready to grasp at a moment's notice of danger.

Arriving opposite to the bushes, in which he

had seen the man disappear, he glanced into them without appearing to do so, and saw the outline of a human form crouching there.

When almost by he suddenly drew a revolver, leveled it and wheeling in his saddle, cried:

"Surrender, or you are a dead man!"

The bushes swayed wildly, and then came a shot from their midst and Bob's horse dropped dead, a bullet in his brain; the noble animal had saved his master's life by throwing up his head just in the nick of time.

Nimble as a cat Bob alighted on his feet, and as they reached the ground he fired his revolver.

A cry of pain, mingled with a curse, followed the shot, and with a bound Bob was in the thicket, and his weapon was leveled at a man who was just rising to his feet, and at the same time trying to draw a revolver from his belt with his left hand, his right hanging limp and useless by his side, having been shattered by the bullet from the youth's pistol.

"Drop that, sir, or take another shot," and Bob's command was obeyed with sullen humor, while the man said:

"It's a cussed shame ter hev ter cave in ter a boy."

"A boy's bullet hits as hard as a man's, my friend, as you'll find out if you don't obey me."

"What does yer want me ter do?"

"Talk quick, fer I has a broken bone here in my arm, durn yer."

"Who are you?"

"A hunter in these parts."

"I have seen you before."

"I guesses not, boy."

"I have."

"Whar?"

"In Salt Lake."

"I never were thar."

"Then it was your ghost."

"I hain't dead, so I guesses not; but it might hev been my twin brother."

"It was you."

"I say no."

"And I say yes, for I saw you twice in Salt Lake, and you were pointed out as—"

"As what?"

"Never mind now; but you come with me."

"Whar?"

"To camp."

"What camp?"

"You shall see; but where is your horse?"

"How does yer know I has one?"

"You are not on foot through this country, so tell me where your horse is?"

"Over thar in ther canyon."

"Lead the way to him— Hold! what are you doing there?" and Bob threw himself upon the man and a fierce struggle at once began.

Bob had caught sight of the man slyly drawing some papers from an inner pocket, as though to drop them in a stream near by, and instantly he had sprung forward to seize them.

The man's right arm was broken, but he was a powerful fellow withal, and under any other circumstances would have come off victor.

But Bob clung to him like a tiger to its prey, twisted his limber body about him, and though taking punishment from his adversary, rained

blow after blow from his small but hard fist into his face with stunning effect.

After a long struggle the man toppled over, worn out with pain, fatigue, and the desperation of the boy's attack.

"I'll take those papers, and tie you to prevent further mischief," panted Bob, bleeding from blows and scratches in the face which the man had given him.

In a moment he had tied up the able arm of his adversary, and then said sternly:

"Now you lead the way to your horse."

The man arose with an effort, and muttering oaths obeyed, and soon came upon a superb animal hitched in a secluded glen.

Bob gazed upon the splendid horse with admiration and said:

"I'll claim this fine animal as you shot mine, and I'll name him Danite, after you."

"I hain't no Danite," growled the prisoner, turning pale.

"Well, we will see if you are; come, we'll strike for camp, as soon as I strip my dead horse of his traps."

This done, Bob started with his prisoner back to camp, and little more than half an hour after his departure, put in an appearance at the general's quarters, considerably the worse for rough usage.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON THE TRAIL TO FORT BRIDGER.

"WELL, Bob, what in the name of the Mormon saints is the matter?" asked the general, as Bob stepped forward, leading his prisoner with one hand and the horse with the other.

"I've caught a Mormon spy, general, and thought I'd fetch him back to you."

"He lies, gin'ral. I ain't no spy, nor no Mormon nuther," put in the prisoner.

"General, I saw this man in Salt Lake, and he was said to be one of the Prophet's spies."

"I saw him dodging me on the trail, and after we had exchanged shots, I breaking his arm and he killing my horse, besides having a little rough-and-tumble fight, I persuaded him to come here."

"These papers, sir, I also took from him."

"Hal they are important, for they are correct statements of my forces, artillery, infantry, cavalry, scouts and all."

"You have made a most important capture, Bob, a most important capture."

"Here, guard, take this man and see that he does not escape, and you, Bob, can go to your quarters and I will send some one else with the dispatches to Fort Bridger."

"No, indeed, general, for I'm all right and can start at once, taking this man's horse; but I would like to ask the prisoner his name."

"What is that ter you?"

"Are you ashamed of your name?"

"No."

"Then tell me it."

"I s'pose I may as well own up, seein' as yer hev got me foul, an' lyin a livin' streak won't save me now yer hes them papers."

"I is called Danite Bill."

"Your are right; that is the name I heard given you."

"Now, general, I am off," and transferring his saddle to the spy's horse, he mounted and dashed away, once more bound on his way to Fort Bridger.

It took Bob but a very few minutes to find out the spy had one of the best, if not the best, horse in that region, for the animal went along with an ease that did not seem to tire him in the least, and at a sweeping gallop that would place many a mile behind him in an hour's time.

Bob was a natural plainsman, one of those whose nature it is to take in situations of peril at a glance, and also to instinctively, as it were, find his way through an unknown country.

He had been a hard student of all signs since he had struck his first day of travel on the way with Brent Hastings to his home, and he had picked up more knowledge in the time he had been on the border than many men would gain in long years.

After being appointed courier by General Johnson he had studied the maps of the country, and gleaned from guides and scouts all the information he could.

Also he had talked with the Indian allies with the command, those among them who could understand English, paying them liberally for their advice, and in that way became thoroughly "posted."

He therefore had no doubts as to his ability not only to find Fort Bridger, but to make a rapid ride there.

On his way he was plotting a little plan of his own, and he determined to carry it out, after delivering his dispatches, be the risk what it might.

Pushing on into the night, until both his horse and himself needed rest, he then camped in a secluded nook of the mountain, and finding good water and grass for Danite, as he called his new steed, he was soon fast asleep.

With the gray of dawn he was awake, and hastily made for himself a tin-cup of coffee, and ate a hearty breakfast, after which he saddled Danite, and again set off at a rapid pace.

He had just reached a level tract of land, running along the base of the mountain, and through which whirled a rapid stream, when he heard the clatter of hoofs.

Glancing in the direction of the sound, he saw a score of horsemen coming around a mountain spur at a gallop.

It was impossible to avoid being seen by them, for it was a hundred yards to the cover in the thicket on the mountain side, from which the band had just emerged.

To turn back, would force him once more to retrace his steps toward the army camp, so he determined to press on and make all speed for Fort Bridger.

At a glance he recognized the horsemen.

They were the band of Red Rockwell, and that cruel young chief rode at their head.

Bob knew that it would be death to him to be taken.

Besides, he remembered that Red Rockwell had been surprised and defeated by Captain Croswan, when he had intended to surprise and capture the ammunition train, and that a pris-

oner taken by the Destroying Angels, and who had escaped and returned to camp, had reported that he, Bob, was the one who had given the warning, for a Danite spy in the army had so told his chief.

Bob well knew that this made him a marked person in these parts, and that the Destroying Angels would end his career by the vilest torture were he captured by them.

As they recognized the boy, a yell broke from the lips of the Angels in chorus, and they spurred on at a terrific pace.

Bob gave rein to his splendid horse, and flew along like the wind.

Then the race and life chase began in earnest.

Red Rockwell was well mounted, and his horse shot ahead of the others.

Then another animal hung on his heels, and a few lengths behind was a third horse.

Behind there came the band bunched together, excepting two or three slow steeds that could not hold the killing pace.

"Those three horses ahead, Danite, have got good speed; but you are holding them where they are, and are not doing your best."

"But I will not push you, good fellow," said Bob, in a kindly tone to his horse, who certainly was not distressing himself by the pace he was going.

"You've got the bottom, and can put on more steam, if I call on you, Danite, so we have them— Hal what are they yelling so about?"

He glanced back at his pursuers, who were yelling defiantly, and then he looked ahead, to suddenly turn pale.

"Great Lord, Danite! we are lost, I am afraid!" cried Bob and he suddenly drew rein and glanced anxiously about him.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LIFE LEAP.

WHAT Bob saw before him was enough to bring him to a halt.

He had been riding along a level plain, a plateau, which was divided in the center by a stream.

The banks of this stream were of rock, and precipitous, the water having worn the bed down to thirty feet below the plain level.

The water looked deep and rushed along like a mill-race.

Along the top of the rocky bank was a light rail, and the trail making a turn with the stream approached it at a spot where deer and other animals had gone down to drink.

But the rock had split off, leaving a cliff alone, and here the time-worn path ended abruptly.

Across to the other side was fully fifteen feet, and it was lower than the one on which Bob had been approaching.

Bob glanced about him and saw that beyond the plateau a valley ended, not a hundred feet away, and that the stream came tumbling over a fall from the mountain above.

Around the plateau the mountain sides were a series of precipices which not even the Rocky Mountain sheep could scale.

To escape he must turn and dash by his pursuers, or attempt the leap across the stream.

He now understood the triumphant yells of the Destroying Angels, who must know the trap into which he was running.

Bob had halted some sixty paces from the stream; but only for an instant, and in that time his quick glance had taken in the situation in all its desperation.

Then he rode to the brink overlooking the stream, and said calmly:

"We must make the leap, Danite, for it's a chance here, and death yonder," and he glanced back at his pursuers, now not three hundred yards away.

Turning, Bob rode back a hundred feet, and then wheeled and urged his horse into a run.

The Destroying Angels yelled the louder, recognizing his purpose, but not believing that he could make it.

It was evident that they recognized him, as the boy prisoner they had once had in their fort, and who had so cleverly escaped them, and as also the one to whom they owed the failure of their plot to ambush the ammunition train.

Like an arrow the superb animal went at the stream; but, apparently dismayed by the magnitude of the undertaking, he suddenly halted upon the brink with a quickness that would have unseated a less skillful rider and hurled him into the waters below.

Angered and anxious at the failure of his horse to make the leap, Bob drove the spurs deep into his side, and wheeling him dashed back to get another start.

The Destroying Angels seemed wild with delight at his failure, and came on with increased speed.

To get a better start, Bob rode still nearer to his foe, and when he turned to make the rush, Red Rockwell was not a hundred yards away, with the band driving on at a terrific pace in the rear of their chief.

Determined to force Danite to the leap, Bob raked him cruelly with the spurs, and yelled at him in savage tones, until the frightened, terror-maddened horse went off like a rocket, bounding into the air and snorting wildly.

Breathlessly the Destroying Angels watched the daring rush for the leap of the brave boy, saw the horse forced into the air, hang suspended an instant as it were, and then come down upon the other bank, while Bob took off his soldier cap and waved it around his head as the noble horse ran on his way to the foothills beyond.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BOY COURIER'S TRIUMPH.

BOB, having made the desperate leap in safety, could not repress a shout of triumph that rose to his lips, and then he patted Danite's neck, saying in a kindly tone:

"Noble fellow! brave old boy, to bring me over in safety."

Danite, having made the leap, seemed proud of it himself, for he stopped his angry snorting, and wild bounds, and sped along with his neck arched and eyes flashing.

Glancing back at his foiled foes, Bob suddenly drew rein, while he cried:

"What! does Red Rockwell intend to risk it too?"

"He is indeed anxious to catch me."

It was true that the chief of the Destroying Angels did intend to attempt the desperate leap, for he had put his revolver back in his holster, gathered his reins well in hand, settled himself in his saddle and was driving straight for the jump.

In his deep interest, Bob forgot his own danger for the moment and stood gazing at the daring horseman.

The men of the band too, in their amazement, came to a halt, and stood gazing spell-bound at their chief.

Like the wind the horseman rushed on, the brink was reached, and just as all expected to see the animal take the bound, he wheeled about and darted away.

He had not dared make the venture.

With a curse, that reached the ears of Bob, Red Rockwell urged his horse into a furious run, circled around, and once more drove straight at the leap.

This time he fairly gashed the flanks of his horse with his sharp spurs, and urged him forward, in a way that rendered him more afraid of his master than the leap before him.

All breathlessly watched the result, saw the horse rise in the air, while a shout burst from the rider's lips, and then came one awful instant of suspense.

One moment the poise, as the horse shot forward, then the downward movement toward the other bank, and next the clatter of the iron hoofs as the front feet touched the edge of rock, and then an exclamation of horror from a score of lips as the animal with a wild neigh went down out of sight!

The plunge followed, and the band rushed for the edge of the precipitous bank to see the result, while Bob also turned.

From the depths of the stream came a loud halloo for help, and the words:

"Throw me a line!"

But on the other shore the nature of the ground was such that no one could reach the edge, except at the spot where the leap was made, and the Destroying Angels, dashing up, stood helpless and dazed, while their chief was being whirled away before their eyes, to be killed upon the rocks jutting out of the waters here and there, or to die by drowning, for no man could live in that whirlpool long.

On the other hand, Bob saw that the ground approaching the stream was open, and he rode up to the edge below the place where Red Rockwell had disappeared, and just out of range of the Danites' bullets.

He heard the cry for help from the chief, and a glance showed him that he could save him.

His was too noble a heart not to aid even a bitter foe in danger of death, and as the Danite chief was being whirled along, he unloosed his long lariat, whirled it above his head, and called out:

"Your men are powerless to save you, so I will.

"Catch this noose."

The chief turned his amazed look upon him, just as the coil was thrown.

He made an effort to catch it, but an eddy seized him, and he failed.

"Never mind, I will try again," cried Bob cheerily, and drawing up his coil again, he dashed along the bank at full speed, and halted at a spot beyond the man who was sweeping so swiftly along.

Once more now!" he called out, as Red Rockwell, nearly exhausted, came driving along.

"All right," was the answer, but the voice showed failing strength.

Again the lariat was thrown, and the hand of Red Rockwell grasped it.

Hastily he slipped the noose over his shoulders, and then came the jerk, as the current swept him to the rope's end.

But Danite stood firm as a rock, the lariat held, and dismounting, Bob began the task of helping the chief out of danger.

After a short rest, Red Rockwell called out that he was able to climb up, and hand over hand he came to the top.

Bob held forth one hand to aid him over the edge, and in the other grasped his revolver.

"You have saved my life, boy; but I suppose it is to make me your prisoner, that Johnson may hang me!"

"You are mi-taken, sir, for I would not take so mean an advantage even of a Danite foe.

"I saved your life, because it was in my power to do so, and now you can go your way, and I will go mine," and Bob wheeled on his heel, and sprung lightly into the saddle.

Across the rugged and cleft-riven land on the other bank, he saw the Destroying Angels struggling slowly to reach the spot opposite, and he was anxious to get away.

In utter amazement Red Rockwell looked at him, and then said:

"Boy, I beg your pardon for the thought I expressed against you, and I humbly acknowledge that I owe you a debt I can see no means of repaying.

"Good-by, and success attend you through life."

"Thank you, and I am sorry I cannot say the same to you."

"We have met before?"

"Yes."

"In my fort?"

"Yes."

"That was a clever escape you made."

"My pard and I both thought so at the time."

"You, in some way, got hold of my intention to attack Johnson's ammunition train and thwarted it?"

"I am glad to say that I did."

"Well, I will return the favor you have done me, by allowing you to pass my men on your way back to your camp."

"No, thank you, I will seek camp by another route."

"You doubt me?"

"I wish to keep clear of the lion's den—good-by," and Bob rode off without another word, wishing to leave Red Rockwell under the impression that he was going back to the army camp, and not toward Fort Bridger.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BOY SPY.

"A COURIER from the army, sir, to see you," said the orderly of Fort Bridger, entering the quarters of Major Durnly one morning early while the officer was dressing for breakfast.

"Show him in at once, orderly," was the reply, and into the room was ushered young Robert Haslam.

"Ah! a courier the orderly said," remarked Major Durnly, gazing at his visitor.

"Yes, sir, I am special courier for General Albert Sydney Johnson," and Bob saluted politely.

"A young one, certainly; but you look like one who knows what he is about."

"I hope I do, sir, and I have brought you these dispatches from General Johnson."

"And you have come through alone?" said the major.

"Yes, sir."

"When did you leave the general?"

"Thirty-six hours ago, sir."

"You have made wonderful time," and the major glanced over the dispatches, and added:

"You also bring important news, and good news—ah, I see that the general speaks of you in most flattering terms, and says that you will bring back return dispatches which I may have for you."

"Now you need food and rest, and you shall be taken good care of, my gallant Boy Courier, for to-morrow you will have to return with important dispatches to the general."

"Pardon me, Major Durnly, but would it be possible to send them by some one else?"

"Certainly, if you do not think you can make the ride."

Bob was slightly nettled by the reply of the officer, and said quickly:

"I can make it, sir, if any one can; but I asked to have another courier return with the dispatches, as I felt that I could serve the general better just now in another capacity."

"And what is that, may I ask?"

"It is possible, sir, for me to play the part of a spy and enter Salt Lake City, when I can get information that will doubtless be valuable to General Johnson."

"What! would you dare do this?"

"Yes, sir."

"But can you?"

"I think so, sir."

"But how, my young friend?"

"I have a plan in my mind, Major Durnly, that I think will work well."

"Come to breakfast with me, my boy—what is your name?"

"Robert Haslam, sir; but the soldiers call me Little Bob."

"Well, Bob, breakfast with me and we will talk the matter over, for I want certain information which can only be gotten in the way you propose, and I believe you can accomplish what you say you will undertake, if anybody can," and the major led the way to his mess quarters, where Bob ate his breakfast with a relish that showed a clear conscience and a good appetite.

CHAPTER XXII.

PLAYING A BOLD GAME.

BOB tarried just long enough at Fort Bridger to fully rest his horse and himself, and then, after a long interview with Major Durnly, he rode away one night just after sunset, bound upon the most perilous undertaking of his life.

With apparent ease he made his way through the mountain passes in the direction of Salt Lake City, and not wishing to make his approach by day, he so timed him-self, that just after sundown the following evening after leaving the fort, he rode up to the outer guard that then encircled the Mormon stronghold.

He was promptly halted, and in response answered:

"A messenger in haste to see the Prophet."

He was ordered to dismount and approach, for the Mormon city was under military rule at that time, and the guards closely inspected him, and one was sent to the inner line with him.

Here he said that he had important tidings for the Mormon chief, and an officer led him to the head-quarters of that distinguished personage who just then was creating such a stir in the United States.

The officer sent in word that a courier had arrived and was anxious to see the chief, and in a few moments after he was admitted into the presence of the man, who held such sway over his subjects as to cause them to back him in his defiance of the United States Government.

The eyes of the Mormon leader turned upon Bob as he advanced toward him, and he asked, sternly:

"Well, young sir, who are you, and from whence do you come?"

Bob did not seem in the least degree abashed by the august presence in which he had so daringly intruded, but answered:

"I am sent by one who was your spy to make his report to you, as he was not able to come."

"Hal! To what spy do you refer?"

"One known as Danite Bill."

"Ah, yes! but has harm befallen the man?"

"It has, sir, for he was shot, and now lies wounded in the mountains."

"Hal! this is bad news, for that man went on important work for me, and—"

"He accomplished it, sir, and here is what he gave me to hand to you," and Bob did not even wince at the lie he was telling as he handed some papers to the chief.

"Aha! This is good indeed, for it gives me just the numbers of my foes that are marching against me, and the trails by which they will doubtless come."

"Danite Bill has done well; but I hope that he is not seriously wounded."

"It is not likely, sir, that he will live," answered Bob, remembering the general's threat against the Mormon spy.

"This is bad. But where is he?"

"In the mountains, sir, not very far from the American army."

"And who are you, my son?"

"I live in the mountains, sir, with my father; and we are friends of Bill's, and he came to our

cabin when he was wounded and begged me to hasten on here with his horse, and give you those papers, and get your orders what was next to be done."

"But if he is wounded he cannot—"

"He wished my father to do what he could for him."

"Then you and your father are true believers?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Well, you have done your duty nobly, and if you care to enlist in secret service for me, I will reward you well."

"Yes, sir."

"When can you return?"

"My horse will need a short rest, sir; but I can go to-morrow night."

"That will do, and I will send by you some instructions to Danite Bill, and he will tell you, or your father—whichever of you undertakes the work—what it is best for you to do."

"The truth is, I want this General Johnson to be thrown off his guard in some way, and to do this I have got to have a pretended deserter from my fold seek his camp for safety, and tell certain stories."

"Now, my son, you look like a shrewd, daring fellow, and I believe you can do the work; but I will see you again—so now go to an inn and get the rest you need."

Bob bowed and departed, and being directed to an inn near by, mounted his horse and rode there, his brain busy with what he had seen and heard.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TRACKER COMES TO GRIEF.

THE young spy had not gone very far before he saw a man on foot sneaking after him.

He felt that he was watched, so at once altered his determination to make a certain visit which he had in his mind, and go at once to an inn.

This he did quietly as though such had been his intention in the first place.

He sought the office, got the landlord to give him a room, and ordering supper went out to look after the welfare of his horse.

This done he returned and ate a hearty meal and went up to his room, asking the landlord to call him early in the morning.

As he passed through the office, he saw seated there the very man whom he had noticed dogging his steps.

He had seen the man at the Mormon headquarters, then caught a glimpse of him as he passed a lighted window, and now recognized him in the inn, and was therefore convinced that with all the Mormon leader's affected confidence in him, he had put a spy upon his track.

Forewarned as he thus was, Bob was forearmed, and went to his room with a firm determination not to be caught in any act where cunning and discretion would prevent.

He heard a step without, and confident that his follower was there, he began whistling in an indifferent way, and, to give the watcher the slip, he coolly undressed himself, put out his lamp and sprang into bed.

A moment after he heard footsteps retreating along the hall, and rising, he dressed in the dark, and going to the window raised the sash and looked out.

It was some fifteen feet from the ground, and his window looked into a small kitchen garden.

Going to his saddle-pockets, which he had brought up in his room with him, Bob took out his lariat and slipping one end around the bed-post, dropped the other to the ground.

A moment after he stood in the little garden, and gazed coolly around him.

Having gotten his bearings he leaped the fence, into an alley running to the stables, and made his way into the street.

He knew enough of the town to take the right direction to the spot he wished to find.

A walk of ten minutes brought him to a house where he had been before.

It was the home of Kit Pinkerton, and the youth sighed as he thought of the sad story he had to tell to the wretched wife and young daughter of Brent Hastings.

A light burned in the same room in which had occurred the meeting of the husband and wife, divided by the deviltry of the Mormon villain; but the shades were down and Bob could not see in the window.

Try as he might, he could get no peep into the interior of the house, and there was but one thing left for him to do, and that was to boldly knock and trust to luck to see those he wished.

Going up to the door he rapped lightly, and soon the door opened.

Bob fairly started, for Eva stood before him, as beautiful as a little fairy, though her face was pale.

She started at seeing him, and for an instant seemed about to cry out, but quickly checking herself she placed her finger upon her lip, and taking his hand led him through the entrance room into one adjoining and where a light burned dimly.

"Sh!" she whispered, "and I will go and tell mamma."

She glided from the room and Bob was alone. Soon there came the rustling of skirts, and Mrs. Hastings entered.

She was deathly pale and looked haggard and worried, while she advanced to Bob and grasped his hands.

Then, as soon as she could command her emotions, she said in a voice that trembled:

"You are the friend of my husband, and a true one, though only a boy."

"I am his friend, and yours, Mrs. Hastings, and I have come to see what I could do for you and Eva."

"Heaven be praised that Brent did not come, for he is a marked man, and I trust you will get into no trouble."

"But now I can do nothing, for I am tied down watching by the bedside of Colonel Pinkerton."

"What! he is not dead, then?" cried Bob in some alarm, mingled with his surprise.

"No; but he has been very, very low, and is not yet out of danger."

"He did not make known who Brent really

was, and held the officer with him that fearful night, to secrecy, so I have not been suspected of treachery, and have nursed the man day and night, as I have been forced to do."

"But tell my husband that, as he has forgiven what seemed an intentional wrong to him, that I will come to him with Eva as soon as it is in my power to do so."

"Tell him not to expose himself, but to be patient and wait, for the American army must soon take this stronghold of Mormonism and all will be well."

Bob had not the heart to tell the poor wife that her husband lay buried in the mountains, so he promised to deliver her messages, and, after arranging to have her communicate with him on a certain day at a spot he named, through some trusty messenger, he took his leave with the words, uttered in a whisper:

"And when you send word, Mrs. Hastings, that you and Eva are well, and how Colonel Pinkerton is, please learn all you can of the movements of the Mormons, that will be of interest to General Johnson, and send that too."

"I will, and such it was my intention to do before you suggested it, for I think I can get certain valuable information that will be useful to the invading army."

Mrs. Hastings then bade Bob good-by and left the room, and a moment after Eva came to escort him out.

He had just parted from her at the gate, and was turning to walk down the street, when, from the shadow of a tree, a man sprang suddenly upon him a knife in his hand.

Even in the darkness Bob recognized his tracker to the inn, and quick as a flash he fired his revolver, without drawing the weapon from the holster, for he knew it was death to him and ruin to Mrs. Hastings and Eva if he was caught there.

With a groan the man sunk in his tracks, while Bob called out to Eva to fly into the house for safety.

But the brave girl instead ran back to his side and said:

"I will not leave you to meet the danger alone."

"But the danger is over, Eva, the man is dead, for he attempted my life and I killed him and you must be in the house, when the guards come, while I will run off and easily get away."

"Quick, do not stay here."

She glanced at the motionless form and with a nod of farewell ran into the house.

Bob knew that the shot would alarm the guards, who would soon be on hand; but he was determined not to leave a living man there to tell upon him, and he placed his hand upon his heart.

It had ceased to beat, and the boy bounded away, just as he heard steps hurriedly approaching.

Back to the kitchen-garden of the inn he went, and finding his lariat still hanging from the window was soon in his room.

Lighting a lamp he saw at once that the door had been unlocked, his tracker having evidently entered by a false key.

"Well, he can tell no tales now, that is certain, so I'll just take a sleep and be ready for the morrow."

So saying, Bob retired to rest with the air of one who was rapidly learning to take life as it came, without fear or repining.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FAVOR RETURNED.

BOB was promptly called, at the hour designated, by the landlord, and after breakfast he was about to order his horse when a messenger came, ordering him up to the quarters of the Mormon leader.

Bob had heard a score of stories already, how a trusted servant of the Mormon chief had been slain during the night, while on secret-service work, but not a whisper was abroad as to who had killed him.

It was, however, with a feeling of dread that he went to face the Mormon chief.

He was, however, greeted in a kindly way, and a number of official papers were handed to him with the remark:

"Give them to Danite Bill, my trusted spy, and he will act upon them."

"In case that Danite Bill should be dead, sir, what shall I do with them?" asked Bob.

"In that case open the package yourself and do as I have ordered him to do, if you do not fear to take big risks."

"I do not fear, sir, and I will do what I can," answered Bob, and ten minutes after he was on his way out of the stronghold of the Mormons.

He had reached a wild place in the mountain trail when he suddenly descried a horseman before him.

He saw that he had come to a halt, was gazing directly at him, and that both hands were raised, and without weapons, as in token of no hostile intentions.

The overhanging rocks and trees just there made the place quite dark even in daylight; but Bob recognized in the new-comer none other than Red Rockwell, the Captain of the Destroying Angels.

Under other circumstances he would have expected war between them; but the attitude of the Danite leader was such that he could do nothing else than meet him upon the same terms the manner of Red Rockwell indicated.

"Well, my young friend, we meet again," said Rockwell with a pleasant smile.

"Yes, and it is not the custom for foes to meet in a peaceful way; but you so wished it, I judge."

"Yes, for though foes in one sense, we are friends also, at least I am your friend, and am here to prove it."

Bob said nothing in reply, and Red Rockwell continued:

"You have embarked in a most perilous work, my young friend."

"To what do you refer?"

"To your being a spy."

"Ah!"

"I know that you entered Salt Lake City as a spy, and that your story about Danite Bill is false, for I am aware that he was hanged by the American army yesterday as a spy."

"You enlisted in the service of our great

Mormon chief, and he trusted you; yet, as he does with all others, he set me to watch you, for I arrived in Salt Lake last night.

"He told me to trail you, and see if it was true that Danite Bill lay wounded in your father's cabin, as you reported."

"If so, to let you go your way; but if you had deceived him, to take you to my fort and execute you."

"Knowing that I would have to do my duty if my men went with me, I sent them one trail while I came this, and now I tell you to make all haste to your army, and I will report that you escaped me. Do you see yonder mountain trail?"

"Yes."

"Take it, for by that way you will meet none of my men, and it is the shortest route to your army."

"You are very kind, and you have liquidated the debt between us," said Bob, grasping the Danite's hand.

"You think so?"

"Yes."

"I am very glad, for I do not like to owe any one a debt of any kind."

"Good-by."

Bob again grasped the outstretched hand of Red Rockwell and rode on his way, while the Danite captain, acquainted with every recess of the mountains, turned shortly off to the left and disappeared in the thicket of undergrowth that covered the hillsides.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DANITE'S WARNING.

WITH a desire to reach the American camp as soon as possible, Bob pressed rapidly on, and without adventure reached the head-quarters of General Johnson.

He found the general very anxious about him, for a courier had arrived from the fort bringing dispatches, and with a hint of the dangerous work that Bob had embarked in.

An interview which he held with the general lasted for an hour, and the papers sent by the Mormon leader were all gone over, and were remarked as having been prepared with a great deal of skill to mislead the Americans regarding the movements of the Mormons.

"This is well concocted, Bob, and the Prophet deserves credit for his cunning; but I shall arrange to disappoint him," said the general.

"I can give you an idea, sir, of just what I think he will do," said Bob.

"I'll warrant you had your eyes open while in the town," answered the general, with a smile.

Bob responded by telling the general just what had occurred to him since leaving camp, from his flight from the Destroying Angels and rescue of Red Rockwell to his meeting that person on the trail and his warning to him.

"I fear you will be a marked person in these parts, Bob," said the general.

"I am willing, sir; but it is catching before hanging, and my luck generally holds me good in a tight place; but, General Johnson, may I make bold to ask about Danite Bill?"

"Ah! that villain whom you captured, Bob,

made his escape in some mysterious way, and so cleverly, indeed, that I cannot hold the guards responsible for it.

"He is a most dangerous man to be at large, Bob, and I warn you to be on the alert against him, for you have made him a most bitter enemy."

Bob made no reply to this warning, but asked the general quietly if there were any dispatches to be sent anywhere.

"Yes, Bob, but I dislike to ask you to keep on the go, as you have been doing."

"I prefer it, sir, to remaining in camp."

"Very well, I wish to send dispatches back to the fort, and they will be ready late in the afternoon, so go to your tent and get needed rest."

Bob took the general's advice, and, after some hours of sleep awoke greatly refreshed.

After partaking of what he called a "good square meal," he reported at the head-quarters ready for his ride to the fort.

Bob had now come to be looked upon by the soldiers as a most important personage.

His daring had won the admiration of all, and already he had received, as was customary among bordermen, half a dozen nick-names.

"Some called him 'Reckless Bob,' others dubbed him 'Little Bob,' and then he bore the not very complimentary appellation of the 'Devil's Rider,' the latter referring to his very reckless manner of dashing along over all kinds of trails.

Many waved him a farewell as he dashed out of camp like an arrow from a bow, mounted upon Danite, who seemed as tireless as his young master.

It was nearly sunset as Bob left the last sentinel behind him and struck the mountain trail.

Suddenly he saw something ahead that attracted his attention.

It was a pile of rocks directly in the trail, and upholding a stout stake, evidently hewn from a tree with a knife.

Upon this stake was fastened securely, with wooden pegs, a thick piece of paper, upon which were a few lines of writing.

The penmanship, or rather pencilmanship, for it was written with a pencil, was none of the best, and the spelling was worse.

But it was plain enough for Bob to read it, and see that it was far from being a pleasant communication for him.

It read as follows:

"A WARNING!

"TO

"THAT IMP OF A KOURYER,

"BOB THE DEVIL'S RIDER.

"He hes got ter quit prowlin' round these trails et he wants ter live, fer ther Angils hes him marked down ter die, an' thar are won on hes trails ter torter him thet rights his name. DANITE BILL."

After the name was rudely drawn a dagger, to make the warning more threatening.

Bob read the notice over carefully several times, and then taking a slip of paper and a

pencil from his pocket, wrote something in a very distinct hand and tacked it with wooden pegs just above the "warning."

What Bob wrote was:

"Danite Bill's warning carefully read and unheeded. COURIER BOB."

Mounting his horse Bob rode on his way once more; but he was ready for any surprise, and watched his trail ahead as closely as a cat would a mouse.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WINTER-QUARTERS.

HAVING to wait for supplies, trains and reinforcements, General Johnson found winter upon him in that wild land of the Mormons, before he was able to move against the stronghold of Salt Lake City.

He was thus forced to go into winter-quarters, and Fort Bridger consequently became the scene of action for the American army during the long and dreary months that followed.

During the time that intervened between the army's leaving the camp in the valley and settling down in winter-quarters, Pony Bob, as he was now generally called, had added greatly to his reputation as a most daring youth and reckless rider.

He had captured from half a dozen Danites, encamped in a canyon one stormy night, their ponies, and six finer specimens of horseflesh were never seen.

Bob had dashed into camp one morning at daybreak, riding Danite, and leading his six ponies, and his capture caused him to be envied by many, while he was offered large prices for the splendid little animals by officers who took a fancy to them.

"No, I'll not sell them, for if I am to be a courier they are just what I need," he answered to those who sought to purchase them.

"But you will not need all six, Bob, so let me have that tan-colored one," said a cavalry captain.

"No, sir, I will not sell for when the season for work opens I will need them all, as I intend to prowl all over this country and learn it well, and it will take the ponies as well as Danite to see me through."

Thus was Bob deaf to all importunities to sell, and gradually his numerous nicknames were dropped and the one of Pony Bob came to be the one by which he was known.

The fact is, Bob had not forgotten that he had pledged himself to rescue Mrs. Hastings and Eva from Salt Lake, and he knew that his six ponies would serve him well if it came to a flight from the place.

While in winter-quarters at Fort Bridger, Bob made several most perilous scouts down to the neighborhood of the Mormon stronghold and always returned with some information of value.

Finding it impossible to get into Salt Lake as he was, and knowing that he would be quickly recognized, and that his speedy death would follow, Bob hit upon a most ingenious method to carry out his determination, and that it met with success, the next chapter will reveal.

CHAPTER XXVII.

UNDER FALSE COLORS.

ONE afternoon when darkness was coming on and a driving snow-storm was prevailing, the sentinel at one of the Mormon outposts was surprised to behold a horseman approaching.

He stood in a canyon pass, seeking for shelter from the wind and driving snow under an overhanging rock, while at his feet blazed a cheerful fire.

He was not expecting an advance of the Prophet's foes in the midst of winter, but the post he held was a good one to be guarded, and hence he was put there to prevent anyone from leaving the town, and to sound an alarm should any one attempt to enter the lines by that lonely pass through the canyon.

A bugle, hanging by a cord about his neck, would have sent its ringing notes far up the canyon and warned the guards at the cabin, but he saw nothing to fear in a woman mounted upon a pony, and he blew no blast of alarm, but regarded her approach with surprise and interest.

She was well mounted, and her dress betokened that she belonged to the higher order of society.

But she was all huddled up in her saddle and seemed very cold and wretched.

Seeing the sentinel she at first drew rein, and then rode rapidly toward him, while she called out:

"Oh, sir, are you a Mormon sentinel?"

"I am, miss, and I am surprised to find you out in such a storm and alone."

"I have only myself to blame for it, for I rode out this morning with a party of friends and foolishly left them just to give them a scare."

"I left by the southern pass and got lost, and oh! I am so glad to find my way again, for I am half-frozen and worn out."

"Poor lady, dismount and warm yourself at my fire, and I will signal for the guard to escort you into town," said the sentinel, assured that the veiled woman was the daughter or wife of some distinguished Mormon.

"No, no; I dare not dismount, but will be obliged and repay you if you will put me on the direct trail into town."

"The fact is, I do not wish my friends to know I got lost, and wish to gain my home as soon as I can unseen."

"Here, take this, my good man, and put me on the way to reach town without being seen."

She thrust into the hand of the sentinel a couple of pieces of gold, and he promptly said:

"I will do as you ask, lady; but I should not really leave my post."

"It will be but for a few minutes."

"True, and the relief will not come until eight o'clock. Just follow me, lady," and in his rich reward the Mormon sentinel forgot his duty and ignored the driving snow-storm.

The horsewoman rode close upon his heels, and was led by a secluded route directly into an opening, from whence the lights of the town could be seen below, and to which led a good roadway.

Thanking the man the woman rode on, and

as though acquainted with the locality, directed her way toward a home in the most pleasant portion of the town.

The snow still drove furiously about, but unheeding it, and seemingly no longer cold, the woman rode into an alleyway and halted by the side of a large stable.

The door opened readily, and both horse and rider disappeared within.

But soon the door reopened and the woman came forth, crossed a small yard and tapped at the door of the house that stood upon the grounds she had invaded.

The one who answered the knock was evidently a servant, and was asked:

"Is Mrs. Pinkerton in?"

"She is m'am; but come in out of the storm and I will call her."

The visitor stepped within the house, where a cheerful fire was blazing upon the hearth, and the servant went off to call her mistress.

Mrs. Pinkerton soon came into the room, and seeing that they were alone, the visitor raised her veil and said in a low voice:

"I must see you alone."

"Bob Haslam!"

The words broke in a hoarse whisper from the lips of the poor woman who had been so cruelly deceived by Kit Pinkerton, the Mormon and she seized the arm of the disguised boy and dragged him quickly to her own room, when she turned and locked the door while she said in a voice that trembled:

"Oh, my boy, why have you so imperiled your precious life?"

"To take you and Eva from this hated life you lead here," was the cool reply of Pony Bob as he sat down before the fire to warm his hands.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PONY BOB'S PLAN FOILED.

MRS. HASTINGS was certainly alarmed at Bob's bold act, in entering the Mormon city as he had.

She had communicated with him several times recently, since she had last seen him, and once Eva had boldly ridden out of the lines on her pony and met the Boy Courier, when they had had a long talk on various subjects.

But now Pony Bob had daringly sought her home, and she was dismayed at his temerity, especially when he said to her that he had come to rescue her and Eva from the bondage in which they lived.

Colonel Pinkerton still lay upon his bed, slowly recovering from his wound, and it had been a long and close struggle between him and death.

The coming of her husband that night he had never spoken of to her, nor referred to his having deceived her as he had, although he well knew that she must be aware of all his treachery.

She had nursed him with devoted kindness, not only from a kindness of heart, but to try and ward off thereby any feeling of revenge he might feel, and endeavor to execute, when he grew better.

It was easy, so easy, for that faithful nurse to end his days as he lay helpless there.

A bandage loosened to bring on a hemorrhage, a drop of poison in a dose of medicine, would quickly avenge the wrong done her and her husband, and under existing circumstances, hardly turn suspicion upon her.

But her heart revolted at the idea, and faithfully taking care of the villain through his long illness, she bided her time, and determined to await until her rescue could be made by her husband.

The delay of the army coming against the Mormons was prolonged torture to her; but she resigned herself to life as it was and waited in patience.

Had she known that her husband, Brent Hastings, then lay in his grave in the mountains, even her nerve and courage could not have held up.

And this Pony Bob well knew, and for that reason had kept the dread secret from her.

Once he freed her from the life she led, once he had her, and Eva, away from the Mormons, and he would break the news of that sad scene of her husband's death.

Finding that the invading army had to go into winter-quarters, and seeing the long dreary months of watching and waiting before the poor woman and beautiful little Eva, Pony Bob grew almost desperate in his anxiety to get them free.

He tried his old plan to communicate with them, but got no replies to his letter, sent in by wood-cart drivers, he handing them to said drivers, while disguised as a Destroying Angel.

After this he hung about Salt Lake, in deadly peril the while, trying to concoct some plan to get into the lines in safety.

Noticing that several riding parties, evidently the wives and daughters of prominent Mormons, were in the habit of going outside the lines for a gallop, he decided upon his course of action, and the ladies at Fort Bridger quickly aided him as far as feminine apparel went.

The reader has seen how cleverly he passed the Mormon sentinel and reached the home of Mrs. Hastings.

Alarmed as she was at his daring, Mrs. Hastings could only say:

"Oh Bob! why did you thus risk your life?"

"I thought I could run the gantlet, Mrs. Hastings, under false colors.

"Don't I make a pretty fair girl?"

"You are in too much danger, Bob, to joke about it, and I am only too thankful that Brent did not come also; but you must not remain here long, as Colonel Pinkerton receives many visitors, now that he is able to see them, and those you have most cause to fear may come in."

"It is such a very stormy night hardly any one will venture forth, Mrs. Hastings, and I put my pony in your shed out of the cold, so that he is safe."

"But Bob, what do you intend to do?" asked the woman, evidently greatly worried.

"Well, I came to take you and Eva out with me."

"Take us out with you?" asked Mrs. Hastings in deep surprise.

"Yes, madam."

"But how?"

"I have three fresh ponies hidden away in the mountains, some fifteen miles from here, and I thought you and Eva could mount your horses, I could ride mine, and we would press on to the relay, and then go in all haste on the fresh animals to Fort Bridger, which is a little over a hundred miles from here right up the canyons."

"But how did you expect to leave the town, Bob?" asked the poor woman with hope in her heart, arising at a chance of escape.

"Oh, the guard would certainly not object to three ladies riding out one pass, you know, to come in at another, especially as the Mormon minute-men would protect them from danger."

"Three ladies, Bob?"

"Yes, madam, for you, Eva, and myself make three."

In spite of herself, Mrs. Hastings smiled at the youth, who continued:

"I did hope to get here in the afternoon early, so that we could get out before sunset, but the storm delayed me."

"And this storm will last for days, perhaps?"

"So it seems, Mrs. Hastings, and I would not risk your and Eva's precious lives by taking you into the mountains, so will have to give it up for the present, and perhaps until spring, for I much fear the snow will not disappear before then."

After deciding that to escape in the face of such a storm was impossible, Bob ate a hearty supper, and with extra wraps furnished him by Eva, left the house, and mounting his pony, started upon his return to Fort Bridger, as dangerous an undertaking in fact, as to face his Mormon foes.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A FIGHT IN A MIDNIGHT SNOW-STORM.

So piercing was the wind, so driving the snow, that the Mormon sentinel whom Bob had passed on his way into town, was shrinking for shelter so far under the overhanging rocks, and hugging the fire so close, he did not see the shadowy form of the pony and his rider go by.

The hardy little pony shrunk from the work ahead of him, for he seemed to know how far he had to travel; but Bob urged him on, and partly by the animal's instinct, and the rider's remembrance of the trail, they at last reached the sheltered nook where the three fresh ponies had been left.

It was in a deep canyon, so thoroughly sheltered by overhanging rocks, that the snow did not fall there.

But Bob was startled as he approached to suddenly discover the glimmer of a fire-light.

What could it mean?

Had his trail been found by Mormon minute-men, and they gone into camp there, considering the ponies their booty?

Had some of the Destroying Angels tracked him there, or were those who had sought refuge in the canyon some of Johnson's scouts?

Whatever and whoever they were, Bob was determined to lose no time in finding out, and

what was more, he was not going to be robbed of his ponies.

The snow was still falling and drifting, and the night bitter cold; but, wrapped up as he was, and, with the exercise of riding, Pony Bob felt warm, and was ready for a skirmish if it had come to it.

Riding into as good a shelter as he could find, he dismounted from his pony, and went on foot closer to the fire.

He had gone but a few rods, when he descried the fire close under an overhanging rock, and so protected by the mountain pines that grew in dense profusion about, that those around it were not visible to him.

Whoever they were, he felt assured that they would not expect the owner of the ponies back in that storm.

Creeping nearer, Bob, to his surprise saw two Indian warriors buddled up over the fire.

In the background were his ponies, and also the animals ridden by the Indians.

He counted the heads of five ponies, and, as he had three, and there were but two warriors, he came to the conclusion that they were all.

"Piutes!" he muttered, for he recognized the Indians as belonging to a tribe just then very hostile to the whites, and whom he had himself not only met before, but had several narrow escapes from.

If seen by the Piutes, Pony Bob knew well that there would be war, and the chances were against him.

He did not like the idea of shooting even an Indian in the back, although he knew the red-skin would gladly do as much for him if he got the chance.

Bob was, as I have said a dead shot, and he felt that he could depend upon himself and his revolvers, so determined to "flush" his game.

That is, upon the principle of a good huntsman giving his bird to take the wing before firing.

Having decided upon this course, Bob drew a revolver, looked well at the hammer and cap, and cocking it, stepped boldly forward with a startling yell upon his lips.

It was so startling that the two warriors tumbled over backward from the log upon which they were seated, and at once grasped their weapons, as they rolled to cover in the shelter of the pines.

But Pony Bob had cleared his conscience of shooting even a red-skin without warning, and quickly his revolver flashed twice.

With the second shot an arrow cut its way through Pony Bob's right arm, destroying his aim and knocking his weapon from his hand, while, with a savage yell one of his foes came bounding toward him.

It was a critical moment for Pony Bob, and he only wished that he had not been so generous.

But his presence of mind did not forsake him, and his left hand held a revolver in an instant, and it flashed quickly.

But not a second too soon, for the Indian fell at his very feet and with an arrow fixed to send through him.

Bob then quickly sprung to cover, for he was not sure that he was altogether victorious; but

upon glancing about him closely, he detected the warrior he had first fired upon lying in a heap in the edge of the pines, and he felt confident that he was dead.

As for the second one there was no doubt of his having gone to the happy hunting-grounds of his tribe.

The wound in his arm paining him, Pony Bob boldly made the venture, stepped out from his cover and found that the two warriors were dead.

His heart revolted from the act of scalping them, but he felt that he should do so, to give their comrades who might see them a lesson, and also to make his story of his adventure hold good in camp, for to kill an Indian, and "not bring in his hair," is set down by plainsmen as a "ghost-story."

So Bob took the ghastly trophies of his battle, and then dressed his wound as well as he could.

Anxious to get on as rapidly as possible, before the snow became too deep, Bob collected his ponies, and those of the slain warriors, heaped the snow over the fallen braves, and, after warming himself and changing his female attire for his own clothes, he drank a tin-cup of hot coffee, mounted one of the fresh horses and started once more through the storm.

For hours he plodded along, changing from one horse to another, the others following close behind, well knowing it was their only salvation.

Guided by the outlines of the hills he kept unerringly on, until some time after daylight, when he halted for rest and food.

He dared not tarry long, and again began his hard struggle.

In one of the canyons the snow was driven to the side, leaving the trail clear and here he moved at a gallop for miles.

All through the day he toiled, and when night came on once more he was yet miles away from the fort.

But he would not give up, would not halt for rest and to warm his benumbed limbs, but pushed on and on.

His sufferings were intense, and the poor dumb brutes seemed utterly fagged out and half-frozen.

But Bob would not halt, for he knew his only safety lay in moving.

From time to time he would change, and now and then push on on foot, to keep from freezing stiff.

At last his resolute pluck was rewarded, for he beheld the glimmer of a light ahead.

"Fort Bridger! Fort Bridger, ponies!" he shouted, and urged his tired pony on.

A few more moments of suffering, and nearer dead than alive, he rode up to the fort, was challenged by the sentinel, and then taken from his horse, for he was powerless to aid himself.

Two of his dumb followers, one of his own, and one of the Indians' ponies had dropped out of the line to die, to freeze, for they could go no further, could no longer stand that driving storm, chilling blasts, hunger, and the mad struggle for life.

Had Fort Bridger been a few miles further off, the career of the young courier would have

ended that night, and, when the snows of winter had melted away, Pony Bob and his ponies would have been found together where they had perished that wild night in Utah.

CHAPTER XXX.

A MORMON MYSTERY.

ALL who were in the garrison of Fort Bridger, that fearful winter, when General Johnson's brave little army waited, watched and suffered there, biding their time when the spring would come and Brigham Young and his followers have to surrender or fight, will never forget it, and many still live who were among those heroes.

At last the snows began to melt, and Pony Bob was one of the first to push toward the Mormon capital.

Commissioners had been sent out in the mean time, compromises had been agreed to, and Salt Lake was to be surrendered to the army.

Through with this news Pony Bob went to the nearest station, from whence the tidings could be sent eastward, and his rapid run through those fastnesses, full of danger, was known as Pony Bob's Lightning Ride.

Brigham Young and his people having deserted their stronghold, Pony Bob went with dispatches to Governor Durkee, then quartered at Salt Lake City, and found the town wholly deserted by those who had held it and defied the United States Government.

Having delivered his dispatches, Bob mounted his horse and dashed away directly for the home of those who had been so constantly in his thoughts.

The house was closed and appeared to be utterly deserted, and Bob's heart sunk as he thought that poor Mrs. Hastings and Eva had been taken with the Mormons.

Quickly he searched about the premises, and was sadly turning away when he heard his name called.

Instantly he glanced about him, and saw the slats of an upper blind move, while a voice said:

"Come to the back door, Bob."

"It is Eva!" he cried, and he fairly bounded to the designated door, which was soon opened, and Eva was before him.

But oh, how sad and pale she looked! And he said:

"Eva—Eva! what has happened?"

"Bob, I am all alone, for poor—poor mamma is dead."

"Your mother dead, Eva?" gasped Bob.

"Yes; mamma's heart broke when she heard papa was dead."

"But, Eva, how did she hear this?"

"Oh, some of Colonel Pinkerton's men told her that they came across a grave in the mountains, and upon a tree by it was cut papa's name and the date of his death, which was the night he left here, and mamma felt that he was wounded then and died in the hills, but you would not tell her."

"I thought it best, Eva."

"It was best, Bob; but mamma was sick and

broken-hearted, and she just faded away and died, and we buried her in the snow."

"And you, Eva?" asked Bob, brushing a tear from his eyes.

"Oh, I lived here with the servants, for after mamma's death, the colonel did not come here much."

"But, when orders came to desert the town, I hid away on the march, and then came back here, for I had taken the back door key, and I knew you would come, Bob; but it was so awful lonely, and I have been here two whole nights."

"Poor little Eva; but your troubles are over now, and kind friends will care for you, and I know your life will be a happy one."

But Pony Bob could not read the future, for, although he got Eva a home with kind people, and the future promised well, she disappeared one night in a most mysterious manner, and Bob Haslam knew not what fate had befallen her.

For months he tried to find some trace of her, and failing to do so, was compelled to accept the theory of those with whom she had lived, which was that the poor girl, crushed by the death of her parents, had taken her own life by springing into some mountain torrent.

Whatever her fate, it remained to Pony Bob a mystery of Mormon-land.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CONCLUSION.

AFTER the close of what was known as the "Mormon War," Pony Bob, having won a reputation as a most dashing and daring rider, and a youth who knew no such thing as fear, was engaged as Pony Express Rider on an Overland trail full of dangers and hardships.

His run was from Smith's Creek to Fort Churchill, one hundred and thirty miles, through an Indian country, which was also infested with road-agents, and many were the narrow escapes that he made.

On several occasions it was Bob's misfortune to ride up to some one of the stations, either Cold Springs, Sand Springs, Sink of the Course or Buckleys, and find the station-keeper dead, slain by Indians or road-agents, and the horses run off, and thus be compelled to push on with the same animal, through an almost waterless and alkali country.

The hardships endured and the dangers met by the young Pony Rider will never be forgotten by him, and his wild riding and adventures in the Rocky Mountains soon gained for him the name of "The Reckless Rider of the Rockies," an appellation he is remembered by to this day by old settlers on the Overland trails of twenty-five years ago in the "times that tried men's souls."

Robert Haslam still lives, a well-to-do man, a dweller in an Eastern city, but though long years have gone by since the Mormon War, he has never forgotten his boyhood life when he was known as the Reckless Rider of the Rockies.

THE END.

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